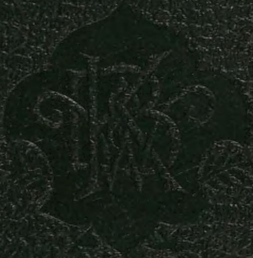

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15

PARISH PROBLEMS

HINTS AND HELPS

FOR THE

PASTOR AND PEOPLE
OF THE CHURCHES

PARISH PROBLEMS

EDITED BY
WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D.D.

NEW YORK
WILBUR B. KETCHAM
2 COOPER UNION

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CONTENTS

I

The Pastor's Call

PAGE
I Candidating and Coquetry .. *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 1
II Vagrant Parsons .... *Washington Gladden* 10
III Stealing a Minister .... " " 15
IV Ministerial Bureaux .... " " 21
V The Pastor and his Pay ..... *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 26
VI Dues not Donations .... " " " 41
VII The Pastor's Vacation ...... " " " 47
VIII Finally, Brethren .... *Washington Gladden* 51
IX Getting Rid of the Pastor . *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 55

II

Parish Business

I Objects, Methods, and Difficulties .... } *Austin Abbott* 64
II Organization, Spiritual and Secular .... } " " 67
III Officers and Membership ... " " 73
IV Administration .... " " 81
V Financial and Legal .... " " 87
VI Parish Ways and Means ... *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 96

III

Parish Buildings

I The Church: Features and Materials .... } *E. C. Gardner* 105
II Style of the Building ..... " " 109
III The Interior .... " " 112

PAGE
IV HEATING AND VENTILATION . . *E. C. Gardner* 116
V SHAMS AND AFFECTATIONS . . . . " " 121
VI UNPRODUCTIVE PROPERTY . . . . *Austin Abbott* 124

IV

THE PASTOR AT HOME

I THE PARSONAGE . . . . *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 129
II THE PASTOR'S WIFE . . . . " " " 136
III THE PASTOR'S CHILDREN . . . . . " " " 142
IV UNREASONABLE DEMANDS . . . . . " " " 146
V A WORD WITH MRS. GRUNDY " " " 151
VI PARISH COURTESIES . . . . " " " 160

V

THE PASTOR AT WORK

I STUDY AND PULPIT . . . . *Theodore T. Munger, D. D.* 169
II PASTORAL VISITATION . . . . *Lewellyn Pratt, D. D.* 179
III FUNERALS . . . . *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 191
IV ORGANIZING THE CHURCH FOR WORK . . . . *George R. Leavitt, D. D.* 204
V THE CHURCH PORCH . . . . *Reuen Thomas, D. D.* 210
VI THE PASTOR AND THE COMMUNITY . . . . *Frank P. Woodbury, D. D.* 216

VI

HELPING THE PASTOR

I COÖPERATION WITH THE PASTOR . . . . *Austin Abbott* 221
II THE HELPFULNESS OF HEARING . . . . *Washington Gladden* 226
III THE DUTY OF TAKING OFFICE " " 230
IV PARISH VISITING . . . . " " 233
V DROPPED STITCHES . . . . " " 236
VI SEXTONS . . . . *Margaret Woods Lawrence* 240

VII

The People at Work

PAGE

I How to Begin Church Work. *Washington Gladden* 247

II The Midweek Service ...... *H. M. Scudder, D. D.* 253

III Prayer Meetings .... *Washington Gladden* 257

IV Fellowship Meetings .... " " 269

V A Church Sociable ... . " " 272

VI The Annual Church Meeting .... " " 276

VII Woman's Work in the Local Church .... *A. H. Bradford, D. D.* 281

VIII Man's Work in the Local Church .... *Washington Gladden* 289

IX Mission Work in the Wide Field .... *H. C. Haydn, D. D.* 295

X Mission Work in the Home Field .... *Lyman Abbott, D. D.* 303

XI Evangelistic Work .... *Charles H. Richards, D. D.* 311

XII The Needs of the Country Churches .... *J. K. Nutting* 317

XIII Societies of Christian Endeavor .... *Frank E. Clark* 324

XIV Broad Church or Narrow Church? .... *Washington Gladden* 332

XV The Church and the Community .... *H. T. Satterlee, D. D.* 336

XVI Latent Power in the Churches .... *Josiah Strong, D. D.* 343

XVII Coöperation with Other Churches .... " " " 355

VIII

The Sunday-School

I The Church and the Sunday-School .... *John H. Vincent, D. D.* 361

II The Main Purpose of the School .... *A. F. Schauffler, D. D.* 365

III Organization and Work .... " " " 368

IV The Lesson .... *John H. Vincent, D. D.* 374

V Grading the School .... " " " 378

VI The Young People and the Sunday-School .... " " " 383

VII Sunday-School Benevolence " " " 386

AGE
VIII PERFORMANCES AND PRIZES.. *A. F. Schauffler, D. D.*......... 390
IX THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY *A. E. Dunning, D. D.*.......... 393
X THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MUSIC.. *W. F. Sherwin* 396

IX

WORSHIP

I THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD'S HOUSE.................. *Washington Gladden*........... 401
II HOW MANY SERVICES? ....*Margaret Woods Lawrence*..... 410
III THE SERVICE OF SONG.......*Washington Gladden* 422
IV THE ORGANIST..... ....*Waldo S. Pratt* 425
V INSTRUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC........... " " 434
VI CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.... " " 441
VII THE CHOIR .... " " 448
VIII HYMN-BOOKS .... " " 456
IX RESPONSIVE SERVICES........*Richard G. Greene*............. 462
X THE LORD'S DAY SERVICE.... " " 469
XI THE CHRISTIAN YEAR........ " " 476

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I

THE PASTOR'S CALL

I

CANDIDATING AND COQUETRY

MUCH has been written and said about ministerial candidating and coquetry. Candidating has been pronounced a system "absolutely, hopelessly, irretrievably vicious," and coquetry represented as its legitimate outgrowth. That there is a great deal of truth in the assertion cannot fairly be denied. Yet it may not be amiss to inquire whether the practice is inherently vicious, or whether much of the evil is not owing to the strange times on which we have fallen.

Our venerated Puritan fathers were in the habit of candidating in a single place, not only for one, two, or three weeks, but for three or six months. And I have never learned that the respect and reverence so fully accorded them were one jot diminished thereby. Indeed, the character and bearing of these men were such as to command the respect of the community. When one of the Connecticut fathers, Dr. Calhoun, was preaching in his young days as a candidate, certain ones called on him, inquiring if he had any property, wishing, as he surmised, to find out how small a salary would meet his actual needs. To these inquiries he replied, "I have a horse, with saddle and bridle, and money enough to get away from this place." He received a call, was pastor there for more than fifty years, and at last died among them, honored and lamented by all. Neither that man nor his office was lowered by his candidating. What, then, has brought the custom into such disrepute?

Some contend that the trouble arises from the fact that the profession is greatly overcrowded. Says one: "More than half of all the ordained ministers, expensively and laboriously educated, tested and approved, are either without charge, or engaged in some other employment than the ministry. Thus, many are watching for settlements as they that watch for the morning. The competition is often unministerial, and sometimes positively disgraceful." Hence, it is plausibly argued that if there were a greater scarcity of clergymen they would be better appreciated, and more eagerly sought after. Over against this explanation may be placed the perpetual cry for more laborers which is wafted on every breeze from all parts of the broad field.

The evil is caused in part, no doubt, by certain ministerial loafers, men who belong to the class of everlasting candidates, and who constitute one of the plagues with which the church is afflicted. Lovers of self, they know nothing of heroism, nor of sacrifice, and they hang about the prosperous parishes, making the impression that there is a large surplus of ministers.

A good man, in reply to a letter suggesting a candidate for the vacant pulpit of a large church, wrote that he had added the name to his list of sixty applicants, remarking that he thought it high time to pray that the Lord would raise up some *little* ministers who would be willing to fill the *little* vacancies. Is there not a whole chapter of wisdom in this suggestion for some of our aspiring young students?

The present style of candidating bears particularly hard on our older clergymen. Think of the wounds it inflicts on self-respect! Think of the suffering a man of sensitiveness must endure in running such a gauntlet! And his wife, too! Here is a refined woman, wedded to a clergyman of fine native gifts and high culture, but who has not the pushing qualities necessary to make his way. In some other occupation he might easily have earned a handsome competency, but in the ministry it has been a life-long struggle for his daily bread. And now, at the age of fifty, perhaps, circumstances make it his duty to resign his post. Of course nothing remains for him but to candidate for another settlement, putting himself, as it were, on the auction block for bidders.

The unfortunate thing about it is that the balancing of the scales often depends upon two or three persons. They may be uneducated, and even illiterate, but if they are the moneyed men, with them is the power of opening and shutting. It may be a small matter that decides them — the voice, the manner, some personal fancy; but, whatever it is, their decision is often final. As the support of the minister comes mainly from them, they must have their way.

The state of things we are considering cannot fail to harm any parish. The people are sure to be informed as to the long and ever-lengthening roll of candidates, and it has the same influence upon them that a rush of suitors has upon a young maiden who does not know her own mind — it makes them giddy and coquettish. What else could be expected?

In dealing with such parishes, some ministers are tempted to enter into disgraceful competitions and to resort to unworthy contrivance, if not to actual subterfuges. This gives color to the charge of clerical coquetry. Of all sorts of coquetry this is the most abhorrent. For a minister to encourage a call for the sake of playing off one parish against another, and thus procuring a larger salary, is simply scandalous.

A case is related of a Western church which, by hard exertion, raised money to defray the traveling expenses of a brilliant Eastern man who charmed them, but whose subsequent course proved that all he had sought was means to defray the expenses of a desired journey. This is a serious charge, and it is to be hoped that the man's conduct was not correctly interpreted. Other cases are cited of ministers virtually accepting a call, and then setting it aside for a louder one, with a larger salary;—in other words, jilting one parish for the sake of another.

Without inquiring into the antecedents of these cases, I will adduce one of a different character. After some correspondence and not a little urging on the part of a church, a young pastor was induced to journey some three hundred miles that he might preach as a candidate. Before his return home, one of the deacons assured him of the general wish that he should labor among them. He also inquired if there was any uncertainty as to his acceptance of a call, informing him that one man, who had promised to come, had disappointed them. Being satisfied on this point, the deacon bade him adieu, assuring him that he should soon hear from them. Six weeks passed, and no letter! And finally it came out that after he left, two other candidates made their appearance, and that, a meeting being called to decide among them all, the third one was chosen. The narrator, who vouches for this story as fact, says, in conclusion: "If this is not church coquetry, what is it? It looks like the conduct of a young miss in her 'teens,' who should get as many lovers at her knee as possible, and then take her choice! Yet it was the action of a staid New England church."

As a remedy for this deplorable state of things, it has been maintained that clergymen ought to say as a body: "We will do no more candidating; you must find out about us as best you can; but we will no longer travel over the country canvassing for office."

On the other hand, it is argued, and not without reason, that, in a certain sense, candidating is common to all the professions; that the doctor when he hangs out his sign, and the lawyer when he makes his first plea, are as really candidates before the community as the minister who preaches in a vacant pulpit. So, also, whoever allows himself to be nominated to a chair of instruction in any of our educational institutions, or to some vacant office in Church or State, is a virtual candidate for that chair or office, and that often while knowing that there are rivals in the field. "What other course is open?" it is asked.

This reasoning does not meet the difficulty. If the present style of ministerial candidating were no worse than that practiced in the other professions, little would need to be said. But it is far otherwise. By old age, or from dissatisfaction, a minister is removed. Instantly the pulpit is transformed into a stage over which passes a long series of ministerial figures. Judging from the comments and criticisms and animadversions, your instruction and edification have no part in the programme. Their business is to exhibit themselves that you may decide which of them is the best actor. By a careful noting of the form, the face, the tone of voice, the gestures, the style, the flowers and the flourishes, the way of coming on, the way of stepping off, and the manner of putting things,—by noting these as displayed often on a single Sabbath you are to decide on the best performer. From this rapidly passing train, your old men and women, your young men and maidens are to select the one who shall break for them the bread of life. A sorry chance if he happens to decline your call, thus subjecting you to a repetition of the dreadful process, and leading, perhaps, to incurable divisions.

What must be the result of such a course to both minister and parish? Will not the spirituality of the man be inevitably lowered? Will not his self-respect be sorely wounded, if not utterly destroyed? And with the mass of church-goers what a crop of self-conceit and captious criticism is likely to be fostered! What a melancholy depreciation of the sacred office of the ministry and of its noble objects! Can all this be a fitting preparation for receiving into good and honest hearts the seed of the divine Husbandman?

We read of one Congregational church in New England, which during three years heard no less than two hundred and forty candidates. At last, when all were apparently united in the choice of a pastor, the installation services were interrupted and finally broken up on account of an opposing faction. The editor who reports the case, pertinently adds: "A congregation that has enjoyed the Christian amusement of criticising two hundred and forty ministers will never settle down to the monotony of the Gospel expounded by a regular pastor."

Another dire experience of a similar kind is thus narrated: "A certain church of which I am cognizant has been for nearly a year without a pastor, during which time the pulpit has been chiefly supplied by seminary students, a flitting phantasmagoria of which it is difficult to retain any one figure distinctly.

"I judge that the Senior Class has been pretty thoroughly represented; surely, unless it is an extraordinarily large one, there cannot be many left behind. And this is quite fit and proper, and we are far from complaining of it, for while we want preaching, they want practice. But our grievance is this, that we are now apparently no nearer settling a minister than when we first began. Not that we cannot fix upon one to suit us; as to that, we should be glad to settle them all—but when the suggestion is made that a call be extended to any particular individual, Mr. Oldboy, for example, the reply is, 'Oh, it would be of no use. Mr. Oldboy could command a salary of two thousand dollars if he had his health. We have never yet given quite eight hundred.'

"'Why not call Mr. Black or Mr. Grey, then?' A doleful shake of the head. 'None of these smart young students would accept a salary of less than a thousand; most of them look for twelve or fifteen hundred.'

"'Then we are reduced to the alternative of raising our salary or calling a stupid minister?' we observe. 'Oh, no,' is the reply, with a visible brightening up. 'We may be able to get an older man—one who has been settled before—for less. *Young* preachers are in great demand, you know.'

"Yes, I *do* know, for I have heard the same thing over and over, from persons of the most opposite tastes and habits, from old and young, male and female.

"Meanwhile, between one thing and another, the church has small prospect of a pastor, young or old, desirable or undesirable, and as there are six or seven Congregational churches within ten miles of us in the same condition, there is reason to fear that this whole region will soon become missionary ground."

In that admirable book, "Laicus," a letter from a clergyman on this subject is introduced:

> "The minister is ordained to preach, to convert impenitent sinners, and to build up and strengthen Christians. Do you suppose I should do either if I came to Wheathedge to preach as a candidate? Not at all. The people would come to criticise, and I should go to be criticised. They would be judged, and would expect to put me through my ministerial paces to try me. 'Come,' the congregation says in effect, to me, 'let us see how you can preach; exhibit your proficiency in the doctrines, try your skill in arousing sinners, see what you can do in interesting the saints, read us a hymn or two as a test of your elocution, and display to us your gifts in prayer; and then, when the service is over, spend a week and take tea with two or three of our principal families, and show us what your social qualifications are.'

"Imagine a client coming to you and saying, 'I have an important case to be tried, sir, and I think of placing it in your hands. Will you oblige me by making a neat little speech? I want to see what kind of a speech you can make.'"

A few other passages follow from the same book:

"We are in a sorry condition here at Wheathedge. For weeks we have been without the Gospel. I do not mean that literally the preaching of the Gospel has been dispensed with . . . but listening to a candidate and listening to the Gospel are two very different things. The candidate preaches to show us how he can do it. We listen to hear how he can do it. From the moment he enters the pulpit all eyes are fixed upon him. His congregation is all attention. Let him not flatter himself. It is as critics, not as sinners, that we listen. We turn round to see how he walks up the aisle. Is his wife so unfortunate as to accompany him? We analyze her bonnet, her dress, her features, her figure. If not, he monopolizes all attention. In five minutes we can tell you the cut of his coat, the character of his cravat, the shape of his collar, the way he wears his hair. If he has any peculiar habit, woe betide him! he is odd. If he has not, woe betide him! he is commonplace and conventional. He rises to invoke the blessing of God. If he goes to the throne of grace, he goes alone. We go no farther than the pulpit. We tell one another afterwards that he is eloquent in prayer, or that his prayers are very common. If his style is solemn, we condemn him as stilted; if it is conversational, we condemn him as too colloquial and familiar. He reads a hymn. We compare his elocution with that of our favorites. We can, any of us, tell you *how* he does it. But *what* he says, there are not half a dozen who can tell. Does he tell us of our sins? we do not look at our own hearts, but at his picture, to see if it is painted well. Does he hold before us the Cross? We do not bow before it; we ask, is it well carved and draped? The Judgment is only a dramatic poem; the Crucifixion, only a tableau. So, though we have preaching we have no Gospel at Wheathedge.

. . . . . .

"For myself, I am in despair. I made no serious objection to being put on the Supply Committee. I found the task a comparatively easy one. I had understood that there was no lack of ministers wanting places. There is none; we have applications three or four deep, of all sorts and kinds, from parishless clergymen. But such a jury as the Wheathedge congregation affords, I never saw, and hope never to see again. I only wish there was some law to treat them as other juries are treated — shut them up in the jury-room till they agree on a verdict.

"The first minister was too old; he would not suit the young folks. The second, just out of the seminary, was too young; the old folks said he had not experience. The third had experience. . . . But he was a bachelor. The people pretty universally declared that the minister should have a wife and a house. The women all said there must be somebody to organize the sewing circles, and to lead the female prayer-meetings. The fourth was married, but he had three or four children; we could not support him. The fifth was a most learned man, who told us the original Greek or Hebrew of his texts, and, morning or evening, never came nearer to America than Rome under Augustus Cæsar. He was dull. The sixth afforded us a most brilliant pyrotechnic display. He spluttered, and fizzed, and banged, as though Fourth of July himself had taken orders and gone to preaching. The young people were carried away; but the old folks all said he was sensational.

"Then, besides those we have heard, there are several we have talked about. There is the Rev. Mr. C——, who has the reputation of being a most excellent pastor. He is indefatigable in visiting the sick, in comforting the afflicted, in dealing with the recreant and unconverted. But Mr. Wheaton says emphatically he will never do for our people. 'He is no preacher, and our people demand first-rate preaching. We must have a man that can draw.'

"We talked over Mr. K——. He is a rare preacher, by all accounts. . . . He preached once or twice on exchange with our old pastor before he left. But Solomon Hardcap would not hear of him, and even Deacon Goodsole shook his head at the suggestion. 'He is not social,' said the Deacon; 'he does not know half the people in Highkrik, where he has been settled for over five years. He often passes his best friend without noticing him.' 'Never would do,' says Mr. Hardcap; 'he only visits his people once a year. I want to *know* my minister. We want a man who will run in and out as if he cared for us. Preaching is all very well, but we don't want a man who is all talk.'

"I am in despair. And, despite the breach of ecclesiastical etiquette, I have resolved to resort to advertising. I have not submitted my advertisement to the other members of the committee, but I am sure that it is in accord with the general feelings of the church:

"*Wanted — a Pastor.* He must be irreproachable in his dress, without being an exquisite; married, but without children; young, but with great experience; learned, but not dull; eloquent in prayer without being colloquial or stilted; reverential, but not conventional; neither old nor commonplace; a brilliant preacher, but not sensational; know every one, but have no favorites; settle all disputes, engage in none; be familiar with the children, but always dignified; be a careful writer, a good extempore speaker, and an assiduous and diligent pastor. Such a person, to whom salary is less an object than 'a field of usefulness,' may hear of an advantageous opening by addressing WHEATHEDGE."

Here is another humorous illustration from a public journal, of the same unreasonable desire and expectation on the part of some churches:

"Oh! by the way! if you learn of any one with energy, tearful interest in the conversion of souls, attractive in preaching, great-hearted, unselfish, merry, in fact, holy — let me know. Paul was much the kind of man we need. We want a man who knows all about the enemy, has some capacity for working miracles, is ready to be stoned, can teach the women, interest the children, convert kings, pick up sticks, earn his own living, go through fire and water for the good of others with no expectation that they will interest themselves in him,— and, in general, lead a forlorn hope of despondent followers."

Such quotations might be indefinitely multiplied, for the literature of this subject is voluminous. But enough has been given to show that the evils of this system are clearly apprehended, and that the current is setting in the right direction. The old-fashioned style of candidating has been alluded to: why could we not return to that? Many churches even now act on that general principle. When a vacancy occurs in the pulpit, the committee provide a temporary supply while they take time to look about carefully for the right man. They quietly consult some of our experienced theological professors and ministerial fathers, until they agree upon one who will be likely to meet their requirements. They make occasion to hear him, at the same time learning all they can about him, when he is invited to supply their pulpit, thus giving opportunity for some mutual acquaintance. In many cases this first trial has proved satisfactory and the church has been saved from the division and ill feeling consequent on a multiplicity of candidates.

II

VAGRANT PARSONS

THE first of the parish problems, the finding of the minister, is sometimes solved with fatal facility. Not infrequently the church is saved the trouble of going in search of a pastor; Mahomet comes to the mountain. Suddenly, upon the scene appears a parson, more or less seedy, not at all bashful, who volunteers to step into the vacant pulpit and assume the pastoral charge. The pious people have been praying that the Lord would send them an under-shepherd; perhaps this is the answer to their prayers. If so, it would be almost sacrilegious to scrutinize his credentials too closely: "The Lord knoweth them that are his," they are inclined to say; and the more this new-comer is involved in mystery, the more reason there is for believing him to be the Lord's messenger. He may have come straight from heaven; they have no very clear proof to the contrary; for he has little to show respecting his residence upon the earth. If some such reasoning as this be not employed by the people of many parishes, then it is clear that they employ no reasoning at all; for it is only on some such grounds that the men whom they accept as spiritual guides could ever have been harbored by them.

The children of light are not yet so wise in their generation as they might be; if they were, ministerial vagrants would not abound and flourish as they do. It is evident that a good share of the saints yet deserve, if they do not covet, the appellation of "the Lord's silly people." The way in which churches here and there are victimized by clerical adventurers argues ill for the discretion of church authorities.

We are frequently hearing of questionable characters who have suddenly come from nobody knows where, and have foisted themselves into vacant pulpits, where, for a while, they subsist, feeding the flock with such moldy fodder as they can manage to scrape together, borrowing all the money they can, often robbing the weak and unwary of that which money cannot restore, and finally going away, usually in some haste, leaving the churches thus possessed and debauched in the condition of the boy in the New Testament out of whom the demon was cast.

Many of these ministerial tramps have no ministerial standing, and make no distinct claim of any; they usually pretend to be connected with some religious body not well known in the neighborhoods where they are operating, but they show no papers; their only credentials are a glib tongue, a sanctimonious tone, and a brazen face. Almost always they make great pretensions to orthodoxy, and their notions of conduct are apt to be extremely rigid. By these professions they gain the confidence of the more austere among the church officers, and contrive to secure a hearing.

Worldly-minded people are inclined to say that any church which suffers an unknown man, bringing no credentials and vouched for by nobody, to vault into its pulpit and to gain access as a clergyman to the homes of its people is unfit to be the custodian of any important trust, and cannot too soon be rent asunder and blotted out. Extinction is, indeed, the just penalty for such stupid infidelity, and many a church suffers it. But in the infliction of this penalty precious interests are sacrificed and innocent persons are ruined.

It is the weaker and more remote parishes that are chiefly infested by ministerial adventurers. Sometimes one who is unusually bold and shrewd ventures into a city church, but this is rare. The clerical tramp, unlike the other varieties of his species, is apt to take to the back roads. And it is the feeble flocks, on New England hills, or at Western cross-roads, whose organization is loose, and whose lines of communication with other churches are not always open, that have greatest need to beware of these wolves in sheep's clothing.

All intelligent members of such churches should be vigilant against this danger. Let them impress upon all those who have the care of these churches the peril of employing, even for a Sunday, unknown persons pretending to be ministers. In one Sunday's service, an artful scamp may lead captive a silly woman or two and wind his toils round a few of the more susceptible brethren, and thus create a party in his own interest that shall cause much trouble. Let the judicious members, whether officers or not, be sure to make their voices heard with respect to all such applications. Let them see to it that a stringent rule is adopted, by which no man shall be suffered to stand one moment in the pulpit, unless he can give a clear account of himself, and present to the officers of the church ample and unquestionable evidence, indorsed by persons well known to them, of his good standing in the ministry.

The official lists of clergymen published by the various denominations ought to guarantee the good standing of all whose names are found in them. Certainly, a man who cannot show his name in one of these official lists ought not to be employed by a church until he can clearly explain why it is not in any of them. No old document ought to be accepted; the name should appear in the latest published roll. Unfortunately, however, the presence of a name in one of these ministerial rolls is not always conclusive evidence that the person bearing it has a right to be recognized as a minister of the Gospel. Ecclesiastical bodies are sometimes extremely careless in admitting ministers to their fellowship; the vilest men sometimes get in on the flimsiest credentials. A few years ago a man who had figured in a disgusting scandal, and who had been summarily expelled from the ministry of his own denomination, appeared at the doors of a respectable ecclesiastical body in the North-west and sought admission. It had been but four or five years since he was driven out of the pulpit, and the details of his villainy had been in all the newspapers, East and West; but with unblushing effrontery he undertook to reinstate himself in the ministry of another denomination. He had no papers, save an honorary degree of Master of Arts conferred on him before his downfall by a too-confiding college, and some similar documents, but he contrived to get an invitation to preach before the body. His fluency and fervor captivated his hearers, and in a burst of confidence they admitted him to their membership and put his name upon their roll. Armed with this certificate he was soon standing as a candidate in the pulpit of one of the leading churches of the West. Here again his smooth tongue won him many adherents, and it was by a mere accident that his true character was discovered in time to prevent the church from calling him to its pastorate. The indecent haste with which this notorious fellow was admitted to membership in a dignified ecclesiastical body, and thus duly accredited as a preacher of the gospel, seems incredible; but the story is an instance, not so rare as it ought to be, of the way things are sometimes done in religious assemblies.

Before us lies a formal confession, by a presbytery at the West, of the manner in which it placed upon its roll the name of a man almost equally notorious, whose credentials were equally unsatisfactory. There is call for far sharper scrutiny into the character of candidates for ministerial fellowship than some of the ecclesiastical bodies are wont to exercise. Their doctrinal beliefs are apt to be carefully looked into; any variation from the creed of the church is speedily discovered and not readily forgiven; but the question whether the candidate has a good character and a clean record has been asked with much less urgency.

There seems to be no way, therefore, of insuring the churches against wicked men and deceivers, but if the denominations would exercise proper care in keeping the names of disreputable men out of their ministerial lists, and if the local churches would rigidly refuse to have any dealings with men whose names do not appear in the latest of these lists, the path of the ministerial vagrant would be much more thorny than he now finds it.

A committee of the National Congregational Council in 1880 undertook to find out the reasons for the brevity of the pastorates in so many of the churches of that denomination,— a malady, by the way, not at all peculiar to that denomination,— and, out of a large number of cases reported to the committee, one hundred and twenty disruptions of the pastorate were ascribed to "the careless engagement of men without proper credentials." How many of these churches were wrecked in this process the committee did not learn.

The scriptural counsel about entertaining strangers was adapted to a simpler mode of life than ours. To take into our homes all the tramps who knock at our doors would be dangerous business. The apostolic injunction cannot be obeyed in our time. Regard for the security of our homes and the lives of those who are dear to us, must make us very cautious about entertaining strangers. And the same rule applies with equal force to the household of faith. Here we find constant use for another apostolic admonition: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world." The ministerial tramp was abroad in those days, and he often laid claim to a superior degree of inspiration. Vacant churches in these days are exposed to the assaults of these evil spirits, and it is sometimes amazing to witness the ease with which they enter in and take possession. Let the custodians of these churches remember that they are responsible, not only for bringing good men into their pulpits, but also for keeping bad men out.

It is true that, in spite of the best endeavors, unworthy men will sometimes gain access to our churches. Credentials will be forged; the most artful methods will be employed; the very elect will sometimes be deceived; but with a proper measure of vigilance the largest share of the evils arising from this source may be prevented.

III

STEALING A MINISTER

WHEN the vacant pastorate is to be filled, two classes of ministers at once present themselves, from the one or the other of which the selection must be made—settled ministers and ministers without charge. Has the church in search of a pastor any right to make overtures to a minister in charge of a church, or is it morally bound to confine its choice to unemployed clergymen or theological students? This is one of the first, and not the least, important of the parish problems.

To the unemployed clergymen the vacant church would naturally turn first for the supply of its pulpit. The man chosen from this class would be ready to come at once; the suffering caused by the rupture of pleasant relations would be avoided. There is never any lack of unemployed ministers, as vacant churches, of much importance, soon discover. And, beyond a question, there may often be found in this class men of excellent ability and unexceptionable character.

The right man can often be found, by a little effort, in this category. There is, no doubt, more reluctance than there should be on the part of vacant churches to turn in this direction. The skepticism with which they often regard a minister who is out of work is unreasonable and unjust. The best men sometimes, for sufficient reason, relinquish for a time work in which they have been abundantly successful; the fact that a man is not employed is not conclusive evidence that he is not worthy of employment. Yet we frequently see a church turn away from a man of fine qualities, and fix its choice upon another every way inferior to him, the only apparent reason being that the latter was settled while the former was not. A little more intelligence and independence of judgment in examining the claims of unemployed ministers may well be commended to vacant churches. It is foolish to take it for granted that the man who is just now waiting for work is not fit to be your pastor. Very likely he is a better man, mentally and morally, than the man whom you will succeed in enticing away from the parish where he is now happily at work.

There is one class of settled ministers, concerning whom the question we are discussing cannot be raised. They are those who, although still remaining in the pastorate, make known their wish to change their field of labor. When the minister has announced this purpose, the right of any vacant church to open negotiations with him cannot be disputed. But the trouble arises with respect to those who have made no such declaration. It frequently happens that a clergyman, supposed to be happily and permanently located, is called away from his work to a new field of labor, amid loud complaints of the injury done to the church left pastorless. Even when a decorous silence is maintained before the public, there is often not a little suppressed resentment; and the opinion that no church has a right to disturb a settled pastor by calling him into its service finds angry expression. The act is denounced as a species of larceny, and laws to punish the crime of stealing of ministers are feelingly invoked. Several flagrant cases of this sort have recently occurred, arousing unwonted ire in the breasts of staid parishioners, and no week passes that does not witness griefs of this nature in some part of the land. The ethics of this relation deserve, therefore, a little careful study. It is a subject in which good Methodists are supposed to have no interest.

Without doubt it is a hardship that a church should be deprived, for any reason, of the services of a teacher to whom it has become attached, and who seems to be contented and successful in his work. The wish to be protected against such a loss is one which the members of a church naturally entertain. But the question has two sides, and the irate church whose pulpit has just been emptied is not apt to see more than one of them. The welfare of the minister, as well as of the church, must be considered. Now, it is unquestionable that the welfare of the minister sometimes requires him to change his field of labor. A life-long pastorate may be the ideal, but it is impossible, in many cases, to realize it. A change is sometimes demanded, not chiefly for an increase of salary, but for relief from burdens of labor and care that have grown intolerable, or to preserve health and power of work. In these exacting times, when the pulpit must grapple with so many questions, and when the condition of power is wide and constant study, this necessity frequently occurs. There are ministers who, by dint of tough constitutions, and by the allowance of liberal and frequent vacations, continue to do severe and thorough work in the same field for a long time; but there are many whose health is less firm and whose congregations are less liberal.

Another fact to be considered is that ministers who, for any reason, are out of service, are not generally wanted. The vacant pulpits do not affect the unemployed parsons. The church that has just been raging about the "stealing" of its own minister will pass by scores of clergymen who are seeking places, and fix its choice on some pastor whose hands are full of work. Among the unemployed clergymen capable and excellent men may often be found; but no fact is more familiar to those who are acquainted with ecclesiastical affairs than that the unemployed clergyman, whatever may be his merits, is at a great disadvantage in seeking a parish. This is a state of things for which the ministers are not responsible; the churches themselves have established this rule, by which it has generally come to be understood that a minister who wants a place is a minister whom no place wants.

It is not, therefore, prudent for the minister to resign his charge, even when he feels that a change is imperative. Even if he were known to be seeking a place, the committees of supply would steel their hearts against him. His only hope is in quietly staying where he is, and doing his work as well as he can. Peradventure some vacant church may spy him out and come to his relief.

Churches are not always so considerate and generous as they ought to be in their treatment of their ministers. The ministers are willing to work, and the churches are willing to let them work. The harder they work the heavier are the burdens laid on them. The contracts, on the part of the churches, are not scrupulously kept; and if the minister is good-natured and does not complain, it is assumed that there is no reason for complaint. Probably, if he should complain, nothing would be done; he thinks it wiser, therefore, to go on with his work and wait until relief shall come to him from some other quarter.

If, therefore, it should be established as a rule that vacant churches must make no overtures to settled ministers, it would go hard with scores of overworked men who ought to find respite in a change of labor. The churches have already made it difficult for a minister without charge to gain employment; if they could create a sentiment which would prevent a settled minister from receiving a call, the ministers would be left in an embarrassing position. The attempt to create such a sentiment is an attempt to form a kind of ecclesiastical trades-union, under which ministers shall be wholly at the mercy of the churches. It is not likely to succeed, but those who are calling for it ought to be aware of the nature of the demand which they are making.

The truth is that the labor market ought to be as free in the clerical profession as in any other business, and attempts to restrict the freedom of movement in this calling are not in the interests of justice and fair play. Granted that there ought to be something other than a business relation between pastor and people, it still remains true that the higher relation must in no wise contravene those principles of justice and freedom on which all contracts are based.

A vacant church has a right to ask any settled pastor whether he desires to change his field of labor. If he does not wish to change he will say so, and no harm will be done. Such a negative reply is often made, even when a great increase of salary is offered. The minister who can be toled away by a bigger salary — with whom the salary is the paramount consideration — is not worth getting or keeping. The church is the gainer that loses him. Doubtless there are such clergymen, but they are not all such; there is no other class of men with whom pecuniary considerations have so little influence. The church whose minister is worth keeping ought to be willing, therefore, that any committee of supply should have free access to him. If the church has confidence enough in its pastor's judgment and integrity to desire his services as a religious teacher, it must believe that he will not encourage any such approaches, unless it is necessary, for some reason, that he should seek another field. And when, for any good reason, such a change becomes necessary, the church should put no obstacle in his way.

The estimate of the ministerial character which is implied in all this clamor of the injured churches, is the reverse of flattering. It seems to be assumed that he is not a free and responsible being; that he is the victim or the dupe of those who have beguiled him away. "It is mean to steal a sheep, but meaner to steal a shepherd," is a common saying of those who thus complain. The saying uncovers the fallacy of the whole case. A sheep can be stolen, because it is a chattel; but a shepherd cannot. The shepherd makes his own contracts, in this country, and so does the minister. His place of labor is not likely to be changed without his own free choice.

Another similitude commonly quoted in such cases is equally lacking in pertinence. The church that calls a settled minister is said to be guilty of an act precisely like that of the woman who hires your cook out of your kitchen. But if there is any wrong in this case, it is in the fact that your cook is ignorant and easily imposed upon; that the woman who has coaxed her away offers her no better place, and thus injures you without benefiting your servant. If the servant is able to judge for herself, and knows that she is improving her condition by the change, what right have you to stand in the way of her going, or to complain of another for giving her what you withhold? This kind of outcry is never heard concerning any class of employees save those who are assumed to be unable to choose wisely for themselves. The cashier of a bank, the superintendent of a railroad, is called from one place to another, and nobody ever thinks of questioning his right to go, or the right of another employer to offer him employment. There seems to be no good reason why the minister should not be credited with as much judgment, and allowed as much liberty, as is granted to a bank cashier or a railroad superintendent.

There seems, then, to be no other method for a church to pursue, if it wishes to keep its minister, than that which every employer must pursue who wishes to retain a valued servant.

The church must keep its part of the contract, must see that its minister is not overworked, must coöperate with him in all possible ways, must show him that his labors are appreciated, and that his welfare is fairly considered. The church that has failed to do this has no ground of complaint when its minister goes away. If, after the church has done all this, the minister departs, common sense will bring the church to one of two conclusions: it will either bow to the providential decree that has removed a faithful teacher, or it will thank God that it is rid of a trifler.

IV

MINISTERIAL BUREAUX

IN most of the great Protestant communions much complaint is heard of a failure to utilize the ministerial forces. On the one side is a great array of vacant churches, on the other a multitude of unemployed ministers. Churches are begging for teachers, and preachers are praying for churches, and there seems to be no way of bringing the demand and the supply together. In the statistics of one religious body now before us, out of a total of 4016 churches, 941 are reported vacant; and out of a total of 3796 ministers, 1137 are "not in pastoral work." Quite a large proportion of these last are employed as teachers or in the work of benevolent societies, or in other callings; nevertheless it is certain that several hundreds of them are available for the supply of the 941 vacant churches, if only the proper adjustments could be made. What a misfortune that so many flocks should be shepherdless while there are so many shepherds searching for flocks!

A state of things quite similar exists in nearly all the Protestant denominations. The Methodists alone escape this reproach. It is their boast that every minister who desires to work is furnished with a field of labor, and that every church wishing a pastor is supplied. Over against the confessed disadvantages of their system, arising out of its imperfect adaptation to work in the larger cities, this great fact may be set. Some degree of freedom and flexibility may well be sacrificed to secure so perfect an economy of force. It is not likely, however, that any of the other denominations will adopt the itinerant system; it is much more likely that the Methodist church will relieve its stringency by important modifications; but it is a question often asked whether some advisory agency might not be contrived that would bring the idle ministers and the empty pulpits into communication, and whether in this way the advantages of the itinerancy could not be secured without suffering its drawbacks.

In the Episcopal church, the Bishop fulfills this function, and it is probable that he accomplishes as much in this direction as is possible under any system which leaves to the local church unlimited power in the choice of its minister. The number of unemployed clergymen and of vacant parishes is smaller in this church than in any of the non-episcopal churches, and this is a strong reason for episcopal supervision. "A church without a bishop" has, beyond a doubt, many advantages: the liberty of which it boasts is a great good; whether it more than compensates for the lack of episcopal oversight and direction is a question into which we do not propose to enter; we only wish to point out that the polity which the non-episcopal churches deliberately renounce works well in the matter now under consideration.

In has been proposed in some of the non-episcopal churches, that each local ecclesiastical body appoint from its own members a ministerial bureau, or committee of ministerial exchange, to serve as a medium of communication between churches wanting ministers and ministers wanting churches. One of the most distinguished of the Presbyterian ministers, the Rev. Dr. Crosby, of New-York, forcibly urged this plan in a lecture at the New Haven Seminary. "The church," he says, "should have an organized system of bringing together unemployed ministers and vacant pulpits, by which, in a quiet way, consistent with the dignity of the church and the self-respect of ministers, churches would be able to act intelligently, without the pernicious practice of candidating. A committee should be intrusted with the delicate matter—a committee of experienced and judicious men, appointed by the chief ecclesiastic body of the district; and to this committee churches should apply, and on this committee ministers should rely."

This plan seems entirely rational and feasible; can any one suggest a serious objection to it? How great would be the gain if the ministers who are now writing and traveling hither and thither in search of work, and the churches that are reaching out blindly after pastors, could be introduced to one another by some such judicious committee! No flaw appears in this reasoning, and yet, when the method is tried, it does not succeed. The great northern Presbyterian church has made full experiment with it, and with discouraging results. This church would seem to possess, in its centralized organization and its admirable discipline, better facilities for the working of such a scheme than most of the other non-episcopal churches can command; yet a strenuous endeavor, continued through several years, to put it into operation, has almost wholly failed. The presbyterial and synodical committees of supply were duly organized, and announced themselves as ready to mediate between vacant pulpits and idle pastors, but they have had little to do. Neither ministers nor churches resorted to them; the evil against which they were to provide is not abated; the "hungry sheep" still "look up and are not fed," and the starving shepherds wait in the market-place because no man has hired them. The result of this experiment indicates, in the words of a late temperate report on the subject, "that neither churches nor ministers can be brought, by any new form of machinery, to leave their concerns in other hands than their own. The committees are left idle while the parties transact their business for themselves."

The reasons of the reluctance of churches and ministers to avail themselves of such an agency do not immediately appear. Is it partly a result of an overstrained independence — a jealousy of ecclesiastical control? Is it due to a fear that the committee or bureau, thus appointed, would learn to domineer over the churches? Such an apprehension seems altogether irrational. The Episcopal churches appear to have preserved all their liberties of choice; they avail themselves constantly of the good offices of the bishop, in the selection of their rectors; but it is probable that they are as free in their action as the churches of any other communion. The danger that an advisory committee, appointed by themselves year by year, would usurp authority over the churches in this matter seems to be exceedingly remote. The fear of losing liberty sometimes degenerates into a ludicrous apprehension. "Give me liberty or give me death!" is a heroic statement, no doubt; but the man who prefers to die in the woods, rather than surrender the liberty of finding his own way out by inquiring at the door of the wood-chopper's cabin, is a cheap variety of hero.

So far as the clergy are concerned, their unwillingness to make use of the ministerial bureaux arises, probably, from a different cause. The larger number of these vacant churches are weak churches, and the unemployed minister hesitates to ask advice of such a committee, lest they should commend him to one of these places, where the labor is abundant but the support is meager. To refuse such an opening would be ungracious; to accept it would imply a degree of self-denial to which he has not attained. Therefore he thinks it more prudent to keep his own counsel and conduct his own negotiations.

If such are the reasons which operate to dissuade the pastorless churches and the churchless parsons from availing themselves of this sensible provision for their mutual benefit, it is to be hoped that they may be reconsidered. A slight accession of common sense and of consecration would be likely to make both parties willing to receive advice, and to agree upon some plan by which the neglected vineyards and the waiting laborers may be brought together.

In the absence of such a plan, much labor of this nature falls upon those who are already overworked. Home missionary secretaries and superintendents, in all the new States, are necessarily burdened with such cares, in behalf of the feeble churches. Yet even they might be relieved to a considerable extent by the coöperation of local committees. Every pastor of a prominent church, East or West, finds himself, willing or unwilling, regularly installed as a ministerial bureau. No small share of his time is taken in replying to questions from idle ministers and vacant churches. If this work could be organized and subdivided, much relief would be afforded to a few very busy men.

Another device which has been resorted to in some of our larger cities is the establishment of local bureaux of temporary supply. Ministers on their vacations or ministers without charge report to these bureaux, and churches of the vicinity needing supplies for their pulpits make application during the week, and take whatever is sent them on Sunday morning. Such a bureau may be a great convenience at times; but, considered as a benevolent institution, its indirect effects are questionable. The value of such an agency cannot be estimated until it is known to what extent the churches are encouraged by its presence to neglect or delay the settlement of pastors, and to rely on a hand-to-mouth provision for their pulpits which saves them considerable money; and also to what extent restless ministers in distant places are led to resign their pulpits and make pilgrimages to the places where the bureaux offer employment. The comparison is undoubtedly rude, and may seem invidious; but, if things sacred may be likened to things profane, the establishment of such an agency may operate, to some extent, like the opening of a soup-kitchen, and the wisest philanthropists are now agreed that the effects of free soup-kitchens are not salutary.

V

THE PASTOR AND HIS PAY

PERHAPS no man ever had a more exalted opinion of the Gospel, or showed more enthusiasm in preaching it, than Paul. And he had good reason. There is no grander vocation than the Christian ministry. To be qualified for the highest success in it, what attainments are needed in every department of scientific and theological knowledge! And to secure these, what years of study and expense are involved! Then, when the work is entered on, what wisdom and tact, what theories and practice, what devotion and self-sacrifice, what protracted toil and enduring patience are requisite!

Writes one of our leading editors:

> "The hardest part of a clergyman's life, as it is of an editor's, is the necessity of producing without the time to produce. Good thoughts, whether in the paper, the volume, or sermon, need time to grow up leisurely, to mature in a calm restfulness, and to be produced when, and only when, they are so far ripe that they need expression. Once in a while we hear a sermon which we know is the fruit of leisure; it must have grown, to be the rounded, balanced thing it is. We feel instinctively that such a paper could not have been thrown off at the rate of two a week, with a hundred other distractions and cares added thereto. But there are few or no ministers who can give their people this kind of fare; college professors may; but, whether happily or unhappily, our clergymen cannot; they must write on the jump; Sundays whirl by in amazing swiftness, and the weekly grist of thought, sensibility, and reflection must be ready. . . . We want to indicate, from our point of view, what we, the public, should expect and demand from the ministers of religion, how forbearing men should be to a class of educated gentlemen, who, although obliged to wear clothes which do not show the stains of labor, are among the most intense and unwearied workers among us."

The genial occupant of Harper's "Easy Chair" adds his testimony:

> "A conscientious clergyman is the hardest-worked man among us; and yet there are very many that look upon him as a kind of drone in the hive, and have a vague idea that he is very well paid for doing very little. Then, in what an atmosphere of abominably impertinent interference the clergy-

man is obliged to breathe! As an illustration, some one in his congregation will wax highly indignant because he imagines he has been listening to an old sermon; but, get at his real feeling, and you will find it is that he pays his minister's tax in the expectation of having two sermons a week, and has no idea of letting him cheat him out of one."

Other paragraphs from the same pen are equally pointed:

"The clergy are the worst paid body of laborers in the country. They work with ability and zeal. They are educated, sensitive men, often carefully nurtured; and they are expected to be everybody's servants, to hold their time and talents at the call of all whimsical old women of the parish and of the selectmen of the town. They are to preach twice or thrice on Sunday, to lecture and expound during the week, to make parochial calls in sun or storm, to visit the poor, to be the confidants and counselors of a throng, and always in every sermon to be fresh and bright, and always ready to do any public service that may be asked. Of course, the clergyman must be chairman of the school committee, and a director of the town library, and president of charitable societies. He cannot give a great deal of money for educational and charitable and æsthetic purposes — not a very great deal; but he can always give time, and he can always make a speech, and draw the resolutions, and direct generally.

"He is, in fact, the town pound to which everybody may commit the truant fancies that nobody else will tolerate upon the pastures and lawns of his attention. He is the town pump at which everybody may fill himself with advice. He is the town bell to summon everybody to every common enterprise. He is the town beast of burden to carry everybody's pack. With all this, he must have a neat and pretty house, and a comely and attractive wife, who must be always ready and well dressed in the parlor, although she cannot afford to hire sufficient 'help.' And the good man's children must be well behaved and properly clad, and his house be a kind of hotel for the traveling brethren. Of course, he must be a scholar and familiar with current literature, and he may justly be expected to fit half a dozen boys for college every year. These are but illustrations of the functions he is to fulfill, and always without murmuring; and for all he is to be glad to get a pittance upon which he can barely bring the ends of the year together, and to know that, if he should suddenly die of overwork, as he probably will, his wife and children will be beggars."

What follows is from an address by the Rev. William M. Taylor, D. D., of the Broadway Tabernacle, New-York:

"When some one was questioning Dr. Wm. Lindsay Alexander, of Edinburgh, concerning his work, he is reported to have said, 'I write as much every year as would make more volumes of printed matter than a prolific author could produce in the same time; I have a correspondence to maintain as large as that of a lawyer in good practice; and I have to make almost as many visits to the sick as a medical man.' 'And what,' said the inquirer, 'do you get as a salary for all that?' 'Not much more than the wages of a banking clerk,' was the reply. Now it would be wrong to give the impression that the labors of every minister are as great as those of the noble representative of Congregationalism in the Scottish metropolis, but still no one who is not constantly beside a pastor has any idea of the work which he is required to perform. He is at the call of the community for everything that needs charity, energy, and self-sacrifice. Is a secretary wanted for some benevolent association; who so fit for the post as the minister? Is an advocate needed for some deserving cause; who so available as the minister? Is a lecture required to help some struggling society out of its difficulties; who is asked to give it so frequently as the minister? Does some movement in the locality need a head or a helper; who is first thought of but the minister? And all these are over and above his proper and peculiar work of teaching the people on the Lord's Day by discourses which are the fruit of study; and his other equally important duty of visiting the sick, and dealing with his people privately and from house to house about their spiritual concerns. Now do not these labors, faithfully performed, demand a worthier recognition than that which many churches give?

"Multitudes seem to imagine that it requires no work whatever to preach. They have the idea that the minister in his student-days has gone to the seminary, somehow as an empty barrel is sent to the spring; and that in after years, as each Sabbath comes round, he has nothing more to do than to stand up and give out so much of that original supply, even as one turns the faucet of a cask and draws off so much for temporary necessity. But this is not the case. Lord Brougham used to say that he knew of no profession that made larger demands upon a man for work than that of the ministry; because, while the lawyer's pleadings were only occasional, and he was always supplied with a full brief for each case, the minister had to appear before the same people, week after week, dealing with the same class of subjects, and was expected to produce discourses that would be marked both by variety and power."

The clerical work has, however, a far more serious aspect. The Christian minister is a physician under divine appointment in the great world-hospital, where he is confronted by every variety of moral disease. It is sometimes his office to

"Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart."

There are critical cases continually occurring, when he watches every symptom with untold anxiety. For, although these cases involve far more than mere physical life or death, his hands are often completely tied. The healer of bodily diseases can shut up his patients in the sick-chamber, darken the room, muffle the knocker, and put the attendants into noiseless slippers, lest, perchance, some inadvertent sound should prove the fatal weight in the life-scales. The physician of the soul can do nothing of this. He sees his patient surrounded by the most perilous influences, but has, it may be, no power to lay his finger on one of them. The case stands trembling in the balance, yet he cannot enforce his most urgent prescription. Sometimes all he can do is to watch and wait and pray. So many little sins, so many low temptations, so many base appetites are clamoring for control, and he standing by and knowing it all, and knowing that the smallest of them may turn the scales, and yet unable to bar the door against a single one of them.

Alas! how many such patients is he watching, who are insensible to their disease, and unconcerned for the result. With what care and skill is the needed medicine wrought into his Sunday's discourse, that, God helping, it may not fail of its effect! How earnest are his pleadings in his closet on the holy morning, that, when he speeds his Gospel-arrow, heaven may indeed "save the mark!" With this heavy burden upon him, he goes to his pulpit to find the one he bears on his heart not in his place, *not there.*

Such are some of the responsibilities under which he is at times ready to sink. Should he not, then, be free from anxiety as to what he shall eat and drink, and wherewithal he shall be clothed? Milton says: "The minister, whose calling and end is spiritual, ought to be honored as a father and physician of the soul (if he be found to be so) with a son-like and disciple-like reverence, which is, indeed, the dearest and most affectionate honor, most to be desired by a wise man, and such as will easily command a free and plentiful provision of outward necessities, without his further care of this world." Many centuries ago the wisest man who ever trod on earth maintained that work is entitled to just wages. And he did this at the very time he was commissioning his disciples for their missionary enterprise. He directs them to take neither stores nor wallets, neither bread nor money, nor to have two coats. He continues, "And into whatsoever house ye enter, in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; *for the laborer is worthy of his hire.*" In this charge the Master established for all time the principle of equity, that the preacher should be supported by his hearers. Yet, notwithstanding the reasonableness of this principle, the emphasis with which it is asserted, and the magnitude of the pastoral work, the question of the minister's support has, from the beginning, been far from easy of adjustment. In the days of our fathers the difficulty of obtaining money furnished some apology for the shortcoming of the churches — a shortcoming illustrated by the reply of one of the early pastors when questioned as to the amount of his salary: "My people give all they are able, and *I take all I can get.*"

In 1621 the stipend was thus settled, "that the minister shall receive yearly fifteen hundred pounds of tobacco and sixteen barrels of corn," which was estimated at two hundred pounds sterling. We find in Felt's "Ecclesiastical History" that in 1650 "the magistrates were informed that the contributions for the church treasury are by degrees so much abated that they afford not any considerable maintenance to the teaching officers, and that much of the wampum brought in is such and so faulty that the officers can hardly or not at all pass it away in any of their occasions. The court thought the matter weighty and worthy of serious consideration. If men from corrupt frame withdraw from so bounden a duty, it will be necessary to order and settle some other course according to the laws. A committee are chosen to consider by what means comfortable maintenance may be raised and duly paid to uphold the ordinances and encourage the officers."

Mr. Cotton's salary at Plymouth, 1668, was eighty pounds, payable, one-third in wheat or butter, one-third in rye barley or pease, and one-third in Indian corn. "Brown bread and the Gospel," they said, "is good fare, and we have here plentie of the Gospel and many sweet delights and variety of comforts."

The parish of the Rev. John French, of Andover, was bound by the terms of his settlement to supply him with wood. But on one occasion they had neglected to provide it, and the winter was about setting in. After reading the proclamation for Thanksgiving on the preceding Sunday, with great apparent simplicity he remarked:

"My brethren, you perceive that his Excellency has appointed next Thursday as the day of Thanksgiving; and, according to custom, it is my purpose to prepare two discourses for that occasion, provided I can write them without a fire."

The hint took effect, and before two o'clock the next day his winter's wood was all piled up in his front yard.

An amusing incident in exactness of settlement is related of Rev. Jacob Patch,—a pure, simple-minded man, who was educated in New England, but became a pastor in northern Indiana when missionary work at the West had only commenced. After a few years, he undertook to build himself a home. The good people near a certain school-house, having a shingle-machine, whose products they used as legal currency, stipulated with Mr. Patch to deliver a certain number of sermons at the price of a bunch of shingles for a sermon. Both preaching and shingles were respectively furnished, and the contracting parties were mutually satisfied. In finishing the house, Mr. Patch was obliged to call for half a bunch extra. When preaching his farewell sermon, after speaking of their pleasant relations and the good that he hoped had been done, he alluded to their contract, and rendered his account, showing that half a bunch had been unpaid for. "And now, my dear brothers and sisters," he concluded, "I am not owing you enough shingles to come to a sermon; but, Providence permitting, I will come over to you at an early day and hold a prayer meeting." "This he did," says the narrator, "and the currency for change was satisfactory."

"Worthy of his hire." If I were asked, I should say that, as applied to the minister, this meant that his salary should be sufficient to enable him to pay any old debts for his education, to live comfortably, to bestow something in charity, to educate his children thoroughly, and to make some little provision for his family when he is cast out of his stewardship by men or removed from it by God; and that he should be able to do this without being obliged, to use a homely but expressive phrase, "to rob Peter to pay Paul." But is the question usually treated thus? Nay, is not so close a bargain sometimes driven that the pastor's family are at their wits' end to keep up a decent appearance and to keep out of debt?

Some one writes: "Ministers' salaries, unlike those of any other workmen, are adjusted according to the necessities of their family. I do not ask my butcher or baker how large a family he has before I decide what profit he is entitled to. I should be surprised if a client were to inquire after the size of mine before he paid me my retainer. But I ascertain that almost the first question of a supply committee is, What is the size of the candidate's family? For the understanding seems to be that the church give a support, not a fair and adequate compensation. The scale of living, not the scale of service, determines salary. Of course, children are an incumbrance."

There are, it is true, many struggling parishes which, doing their very best, can give their minister but a scanty stipend. Of these willing but unable hands, his blood will not be required; they have done what they could. Many an excellent minister and wife have devoted themselves to some such needy flock, cheerfully sharing their poverty, and spending and being spent in their service. Verily, they shall not lose their reward.

Passing now to the parishes better endowed in this world's goods, twelve hundred dollars or a thousand, with the use of a parsonage, is often considered a liberal salary for a country pastor. And judging by comparison, it is really so. But would your merchants and manufacturers, your lawyers and your physicians regard this income as sufficient for their support? And has your pastor any fewer necessary expenses?

As to the general proposition that the laborer is worthy of his hire, all mankind assent. Why, then, should the pastor be exempted from this universal rule?

What has he done to forfeit those immunities which everybody else, not excepting the boot-black and the scavenger, may lay claim to? I will tell you what he has done. He has often spent ten years of study in preparation for his ministerial work: years of hard toil which may have left him heavily in debt; years, when he has sometimes not known which way to turn for the lack of a few pennies; when his garments have often been patched and threadbare, and his food scanty and insufficient, and when he has been only too glad to teach school, swing the scythe, hoe corn, or act the hostler in some private family, so that he could thereby relieve his pressing wants without abandoning his great work.

There are considerate parishes which nobly cancel their pastor's debts at the very outset, so that he can enter fair and square with the world on his ministerial course; or which have a special reference to these debts in the provision made for his support. But how many parishioners are there who higgle with their minister and wrangle with each other about his salary! And how many a minister is left to struggle hopelessly with these debts all his life long!

Is not one warranted in asking whether there are not some parishes quite in the way of seeking a Gabriel for their pastor, and after the first year commencing a process of slow starvation, or taking it for granted that the ambrosial diet which sufficed for the old pagan gods is fare quite substantial enough for their minister?

There is a singular kind of reasoning with regard to this profession. If a minister does not happen to be entirely dependent on his people for support, there are those who think he has less claim upon them. Indeed, it is sometimes quite difficult for one who has resources of his own, however small, to get any considerable portion of his stipulated salary. But do you complain of your doctor or lawyer for charging the current fees, because he does not depend on them for his daily bread? Or do you expect your merchant or your grocer to discount to you a third or a half from the fair price of his goods, on the ground of his being well to do in the world? If there is reason why you should make full payment to any one for value received, there is no less reason why you should make it to your minister. And he who releases his people from this obligation, when they are able to meet it, countenances an open wrong, and does an injury to them as well as to his successor. On all accounts, therefore, it is important that the minister, unless among a missionary people, should insist upon an equitable remuneration.

Rev. Dr. Codman, of Dorchester, took this ground with his society, knowing that men attach a higher value to what costs them something, and are more likely to be benefited by it. And the Rev. Mr. Trask, also a man of property, said to his people at his settlement, "I want you to understand that you are to pay me the same as any other man, and at any time you want me to go, just leave the quarter's salary unpaid."

If a clergyman of independent resources happen to have his house furnished a little more conveniently than many of the houses in his parish, and to live on a scale somewhat above the average of his people, complaints are often made. But, provided he is faithful in his work, mingling freely with the lowest as well as the highest, there is not the smallest ground for dissatisfaction; and murmurings on this account are unchristian and illiberal.

As a matter of fact, however, the clergy, though the hardest workers in the community, are the poorest paid. Between 1860 and 1865, the expense of living increased one hundred per cent. In respect to one thousand ministers in eight different denominations, the average increase of salary and gratuities during that time was only twenty per cent., while, during the same time, the increase of wages to the common laborer was fifty per cent., and that of the profits of trade and manufactures one hundred per cent., thus showing the disproportionate remuneration of ministerial labor in comparison with other employments.

A few years since there were not far from five thousand clergymen in our prosperous country who received an annual salary of less than five hundred dollars, thus making — according to some writer — "every fifth church in the nation a town poor-house, and keeping its minister a pauper."

"The average pay of Christian ministers in this country," says one, "is the same with the better class of manual day laborers, and, of course much less than the pay of journeymen mechanics."

Another writer: "I have seen a minister become thinner and feebler, less capable of energetic oratory, of serene, effective thought, and of brisk and joyous activity in pastoral work, simply because he could not afford to supply his table with a sufficiency of nutritious food. There are such ministers with families to support, who have felt constrained to leave the pulpit and go into secular business as the only way of obeying the Scripture injunction, 'Owe no man anything.'"

The following racy sketch invests the subject with a certain grim humor:

"'Father Tutwiler,' says the moderator of a Western presbytery, who calls this name in its order upon the roll, 'Father Tutwiler, please state what compensation you have received for your services during the year past.'

"The person addressed clears his throat. 'Yes, Mr. Moderator. I preached this last year, first Sabbath of the month, Limestone Ridge; second Sabbath, Boggy Bottom; third Sabbath, Plum Creek; fourth Sabbath, Smith's Hollow; fifth Sabbath, when there was one, at Jackson's Crossing or wherever was opportunity. It has been rather a hard year, brethren. I had to travel late Saturday night several times getting to Boggy Bottom, the mud was so very deep. Smith's Hollow, the church is on the other side. I had to swim twice; Plum Creek was past fording. I had to camp out one night until it ran down. I managed to get over the rheumatism before next Lord's Day ——'

"'But, Father Tutwiler,' the moderator urges, 'the question is now upon compensation. What salary did you receive from all these various charges?'

"'Compensation. Yes, I know, Mr. Moderator. I left it to the people. There was no written agreement. The people are poor and few and scattered. Five Points, Limestone Ridge, Boggy Bottom, Plum Creek, Smith's Hollow, Jackson's Crossing, important centers. My horse gave out, brethren.'

"'Father Tutwiler, your compensa——'

"'Left it to the people, Moderator. I never missed a single Sabbath at any point. At the end of the year the only compensation I received ——'

"Now, what that minister said then and there is literal fact. The writer being pressed at a certain synod to make remarks during the hour set apart to home missions, stated the fact in question as part of said remarks. He almost regretted doing so. Possibly the hearers thought the speaker mistaken. One excellent brother was exasperated into making a speech denouncing Father Tutwiler and all laborers like him for submitting to such treatment, degrading themselves and spoiling the churches. Very likely! But the dear old Father Tutwiler has been in the receipt some years now and will be forever, from the hands of Christ in person, of ample reward. If it is any satisfaction to know it, every individual of those failing to do his duty in the matter shall give due account to the same Master.

"Besides, Father Tutwiler *was* very dull, extremely uninteresting, listened to merely because it was he or no minister at all. 'We would rather pay that blessed old soul *not* to preach,' good Christians remarked who felt it a duty to attend. Yet there is many a field where it is just such a messenger or none. Father Tutwiler (of course, that is not his real name) had received a thorough collegiate and theological training; must have been, at least, a much stronger preacher in his earlier days. Yet poverty, care, work upon his fragment of a farm, mortification until it became his life-long bread, association chiefly with the unlettered in his rounds, and the like, had slowly deëducated the man! But, if his sermon was nothing, what of his hymns, Scriptures, prayers at every service? What of his baptisms, breaking the bread and giving the cup? Frankly, I do believe the Master has meaning in leaving as long as he does every such servant; I do believe Jesus rates such more highly, here and hereafter, than many a minister with a thousand-fold the talent and the salary. The practical wisdom of admitting young men merely because pious to the ministry is not the question here; it is of the actual Father Tutwiler I am speaking.

"'Compensation? For the year? I was quite sick, Moderator,' he said, 'at Smith's Hollow, in consequence of my wetting. The friends with whom I staid let me have their vial of paregoric. Monday, before leaving, I offered to return it. "Oh! no, Father Tutwiler," they said, "you may need it again. Keep it, Father Tutwiler, keep it, *keep* it." And that, Moderator, is all the compensation I have received from the points

I have mentioned for my labors during the year!' Your incredulity, reader, may spoil your smile. But I cannot help that; it is simple fact."

"Does not the Protestant Church teach celibacy?" asks some one. "Let a young minister, not in the hope and trust of inexperience, but with practical truth, go from church to church, and compare accurately the salaries with the cost of living, and he will find an argument for it more stern and convincing than all the Roman dogmas."

In view of such facts, it would not be strange if there should be a falling off in the ministerial ranks. In an article which appeared in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* some years since on the question, "What can be done for augmenting the number of Christian ministers?" Professor Park writes: "The sons of clergymen! They are often the very last men who can be persuaded to enter the profession of their ancestors. They dread the fiery processes in which their parents were burned. This is the language of one: 'I remember that salary of five hundred dollars which was covenanted to my father, and I remember those small driblets in which, months after it was due, that salary was paid, but not entirely paid; I cannot forget the anxiety of my father about his debts for my school-books and my college board. The sons of laymen must take their turn and go into the ministry; I know too much!' The language of another is: 'Do you tell me that I must be a minister? Tell not me that. Tell that to the marines. I am young, but I have learned something. I cannot forget the wan countenance of my mother as she listened to the complaints of the parishioners against the words, the manners, and the dress of her husband and herself and her children, and as she took the last look of the parsonage where her children were born, and where she had tended her frugal garden of herbs and flowers. She went in a sort of exile to a second parish, and then, as in another banishment, to a third; when again she found no rest until she had her dismission from the church militant.'"

Abundant, however, as is the evidence of injustice and wrong on the part of our parishes, it must not be forgotten that there is another side to the subject. It is a painful admission, but it cannot be denied that there are mercenary ministers,— we devoutly hope not many,— men who apparently act on the principle of getting all they can; men, some of them, with a fair support, who are grasping and improvident, who are continually getting into needless debt, and looking to their people to get them out; who are always dissatisfied and grumbling; and who invariably conclude that their duty lies where the largest salary invites. Men of this character, invested with the sacred office, are wolves in sheep's clothing. From all such may the church be speedily delivered!

It is a dark picture that I have been spreading on the canvas. It is, however, due to the churches to say that ignorance and lack of consideration have much to do with this widespread and singular injustice. Their privations, self-denials, and sufferings are not often on the lips of clergymen.

It must be admitted, moreover, that comparatively few have any idea how much greater are the minister's ordinary expenses than those of the average members of his congregation, while many have a very exaggerated estimate of his perquisites. And even in cases where a suspicion is entertained that there may be some lack, one looks to another, the church waiting for the officers to move, the officers waiting for the more wealthy members, and these rich members in turn waiting for some church action. Thus, "what is everybody's business is nobody's."

Sometimes all this goes on from sheer habit. There are many excellent people who, if they candidly looked into the matter, would not only make their minister no exception to the principle of equitable remuneration, but, with a generous appreciation of the blessings they receive through a faithful Gospel ministry, would gladly act on the apostles' higher law: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." Indeed, justice requires the hearty admission that an improvement has been gradually taking place. From the statistics we learn that in some parts of the country there is a slow but steady increase of the average salaries. So that, however dark the outlook still may be, there has clearly been sufficient progress to indicate a juster view of what is due to the ministry, and to serve as an omen of a brighter future.

Looking on this subject in a merely temporal light, dark clouds have confronted us; but we are very sure that on the other side they are shining with a light that is not of earth. It is the occasional glimpses of this exceeding brightness as through some sudden rift it breaks upon the eye of faith, that give to the earnest pastor that devotion to his work, the explanation of which is, "The love of Christ constraineth me." "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

A Harvard graduate, when hesitating between the law and the ministry, called on President Walker, and made known his perplexities. The doctor spoke of the law as a good profession, stating its advantages. But when the young man said to him, "I have thought also of the ministry," the president made very clear and emphatic his own view of its benefits by saying: "The professional labors of the minister are in the same line with his highest spiritual improvement," and thus decided the young student to prepare for the ministry.

Writes a theological professor of wide experience: "There is many a minister who is happier in his work than he could be in any other sphere. 'I would not exchange my scene of duty for any other scene on earth.' Who utters these words? They are uttered not so often by the farmer, or merchant, or physician, or barrister, or scientific teacher, as by the pastor; not so often by the pastor of an affluent parish as by the missionary in our new States or in foreign lands."

A Methodist clergyman, Dr. Nathan Bangs, had a wise meaning in his reply when an aged layman who, against his convictions, had turned away from the ministry, asked him: "Is it possible for a man, after having through a long life remained out of the office to which God was calling him,—is it possible for such a man to get into heaven?" Dr. Bangs bowed his head, and after deep thought made answer: "Brother, there may be a possibility of his getting into heaven, but another will take his crown."

"I went into the pulpit," one narrates, with extreme reluctance and diffidence. There has not been a week for twenty-five years when that sense of unfitness has not distressed me; and yet the dear Master placed me where I was loved, and where I also loved. The tenderest recollections of my life are associated with my parish in the country, every square foot of which has a sort of sacredness to me; the houses, the roads, the marriage altars, the graves, all make up a totality of experience that I would not exchange for the fortune of a Stewart or an Astor. And yet, pecuniarily, I was often straitened; but if this were my dying testimony, I would bear witness to the faithfulness of the Chief Shepherd in giving me a competence. Had I my life to live over, I would be glad to have it mainly as it has been, except unfaithfulness."

VI

DUES NOT DONATIONS

IN a Boston paper, some time since, appeared an account of a remarkable "old-time" donation, written by a Cambridge gentleman, the giver and receiver being each his grandfather.

It was the custom in those early days to supplement the small salaries of clergymen from the farms, wood being one of the chief contributions. One day, as Colonel Leonard Stone, of Templeton, was driving a very large load of wood to the parsonage occupied by Dr. Wellington, his pastor, he was playfully accosted by his brother: "Why don't you take your minister a load of wood while you are about it?" Colonel Leonard, who had been sawing out lumber at the mill, promptly responded, "I 'll give the minister as big a load as you will take." The challenge was at once accepted. A sled was built thirty feet long and eight wide, holding twelve cords at a layer. On the appointed day, forty cords of huge slabs were piled on the sled, and with one hundred and sixty oxen hitched on, the team started. People flocked to see it go by, children being let out of school to join the wondering crowd. On the second day it reached its journey's end, where it remained loaded for a long time, strangers coming from far and near to look upon it. It hardly need be said that the minister was not out of wood for many years.

It is a simple ethical principle that the payment of an honest debt is in no sense a charity. And well would it be for the ministers if some of our churches better understood this.

Are donation visits expedient? This is a question more easily asked than answered, since the answer involves not only latitudes and longitudes, but modes and tenses. In some farming communities, it is difficult to raise the stipulated salary in money. In such cases if a fair contract is made in the beginning, inclusive of these visits, and it is understood that the pastor is not hampered by them, there may be no very serious objection to the arrangement. Yet if a minister accepts a call, with the expectation of receiving what is equivalent to a certain sum of money in the various articles thus given, he is very likely to be disappointed.

Suppose three or four barrels of apples and as many of potatoes, with a proportionate amount of other vegetables, are an ample supply for a minister's family. Yet at one of his donation visits, it so happens that, as these articles are unusually plenty, barrel after barrel of potatoes and apples is rolled into his cellar, and uncounted quantities of beets, carrots, turnips, and onions are emptied into its corners and arches, making heaps large enough to supply some little Fifth Avenue hotel; while in the kitchen bags of dried apples are scattered around in the same masterly profusion.

Then, as it happens to be "butchering-time," fifteen or twenty farmers, who have been killing beef, each bring a nice roasting-piece, and as many who have been killing pigs, each a piece of fresh pork — these various contributions, according to parish computation, making up the stipulated sum.

The minister's eye, well satisfied, surveys the prospective roast beef as so much of contribution to his physical forces. But the sight of that goodly row of spare-ribs, though it would have put Charles Lamb into ecstasies, is just the least bit in the world embarrassing to the pastor's wife, since she does not consider surfeiting on fresh pork particularly desirable in a sanitary point of view.

Now what is to be done with this superfluity of good things? It is not in the parson's line to go into market with them. So he must either let his stock spoil, or dispose of it in trade, with great trouble and perhaps greater sacrifice, or devote it to those who in these commodities are needier than himself.

I am no better off for possessing a set of blacksmith's tools which I know not how to use. And if a retired tailor or shoemaker or carpenter takes it into his head to bring as his offering his implements of labor, I am not one farthing the richer. Nor will a gold-headed cane or an elegant silver pitcher help me to pay for a cord of wood or a barrel of flour for which I am in debt. So when the avails of a donation visit are estimated at a certain value, we need to inquire what they are worth to the minister.

"Dear me!" exclaimed a pastor as he unrolled a gorgeous pair of slippers suggestive of Joseph's coat of many colors, and the fifth pair that had been presented to him — "Dear me! if it were only a new pair of boots!"

However equitably disposed a people may be, there are unavoidable difficulties connected with any such mode of settlement. And it should be remembered that, with wise management, money would go very much farther than many of the articles given. A wide margin, therefore, should be allowed for this difference.

There are aspects in which these visits are of doubtful tendency, if not a positive evil; as, for instance, where a salary has been whittled down to the very tiniest point, and a donation visit is gotten up as a cover or pretext for this injustice — a sort of salve to the sore parish conscience.

For a minister to receive a call on a meager provision for his support, with a sort of intimation that it shall be made up in *presents*, is a grievous offense to his self-respect, to which no man ought to submit. Not for a single moment should one be made to feel under obligations for what are his righteous dues.

How many tears of vexation have been shed at the inconsiderateness sometimes evinced in such matters! Wrote a minister's daughter to her mother: "Why is it, when father's salary is the merest pittance, that our people must bestow their donations in such a way as to make us feel that we are *objects of charity*, giving a little tea or sugar or a piece of cheese with an air as if conferring some great favor, and collecting a few dollars and cents by passing around a hat in our presence? It makes my cheeks burn for shame that they have no more feeling than to treat us as if we were beggars."

Ah, do not thus pour the gall of bitterness into your minister's cup. Such humiliating dependence is a gross indignity; and not only so, but it sometimes operates as a sore temptation to a pastor, offering a premium to silence when he knows he ought to speak. Not that he would care for himself; indeed, he may have something of that old Lutheran valor which would lead to the discharge of duty in the face of as many devils as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses. But when a man's family is half starved, that is another thing, and even a brave soldier may be pardoned for faltering here.

To make the case more specific, suppose that in the parish there is a rich and large-hearted, though somewhat conceited and irascible man, whose annual offering is a handsome sum of money. Now the question of the minister's sending his son to school during a certain year turns on his receiving this accustomed amount. But it so happens that as to the temperance movement, or some other moral question, said parishioner may take a different view from his pastor. If the latter feels called upon to make a public expression of his opinions, this man takes offense, withholds his usual offering, and the poor boy must stay at home. It is easy to say what one *ought* to do in view of such probabilities, but it is not always so easy, even for a resolute man, to do it.

Considering that parish feelings are such an uncertain quantity, a minister ought not to be subjected, for his regular support, to their fluctuations or hap-hazards, and on no account should anything affecting his daily bread be allowed to interpose a temptation to remit his outspeaking faithfulness. If it is out of the question for you to raise the stipulated amount in money, and you are honestly intent on making up the deficiency, a delicate consideration will enable you to do it in an acceptable way.

Human nature is liable to strange freaks. I have heard of people, well-meaning, but not remarkably intelligent or open-handed, who somehow retain a feeling of ownership in what has come from the parish to the parsonage. If the donated bonnets, or sacks, or dresses, or chairs, or carpets do not happen to be used precisely according to their notions, they feel aggrieved, and do not scruple to grumble about it. They "don't want to see *their* money misapplied." Do you suppose the inmates of the parsonage are ignorant of this grumbling? Think what an unsavory pill it must be to them! You commit wrong enough in making them eat the bread of dependence, without embittering it by such reproaches.

It is a great art, that of making presents so as not to cause more pain than pleasure. One man will give twenty-five cents as if it were a hundred dollars, and another man will give a hundred dollars as if it were twenty-five cents. You may have had bestowed on you a costly gift in such a charming way that you not only feel no burden of obligation, but almost fancy that you have obliged the donor. This is "giving like a prince."

Again, you may have been made positively uncomfortable, if not angry, by some trifling present which you could not well refuse, simply from the grand air in which it was bestowed. There is scarcely anything harder for a sensitive person to endure than this patronizing, nor ought one to endure it. If, therefore, it is worth while to have donation parties, it is also worth while to seek out the most welcome modes of conducting them; and where they are planned for the purpose of eking out a scanty stipend, it is all the more important that they be managed with the nicest sense of propriety.

In your commendable design of making up a purse for your minister's family, a little Yankee tact will help you to a more delicate and agreeable way of accomplishing it than passing a hat or plate in their presence. And a little Christian consideration will prevent your carrying anything to the parsonage simply because it has been lying round your house, and nobody wants it, and you are glad to get rid of it. If you wish to express your interest by some gift, be sure to get what you know will be of service, even if you have to exercise considerable ingenuity in finding this out.

There is no reason, in the nature of things, why donation or surprise visits, as they are sometimes called, may not only be agreeable, but productive of good results, both to pastor and people. The instances are not infrequent where this has proved the case. But such results are far more likely to follow where an adequate support has been provided, and these visits are simply the tokens of an affectionate interest or the overflow of good-will, rather than a substitute for an equitable support. Under circumstances of this kind, as expressions of appreciation for your minister, they serve as a grateful encouragement to him in his labors, besides proving a substantial assistance.

But, be these donations great or small, it is the fashion nowadays to proclaim them to the world. Whether designed as a tribute to pastor or parish, the expediency of such proclamation is very questionable. "If unable to pay a large salary," says the *Easy Chair*, "and you occasionally make up a purse, why not make it a point of honor that nobody mentions it in the newspapers? What is the object? It is the glorification of the generous society that presents the purse. It is *not*, as somebody claims, a beautiful public tribute of respect and regard for their minister, for he knows, and they know, and everybody knows that the sole public impression is that poor Blank must have been very sore pressed indeed when he is eloquently grateful for fifty cents, or a new hat, or a coat, or whatever it may be. The whole ceremony is Mrs. Grundy's attempt to eat her cake and have it at the same time."

At a meeting of a presbytery in the Empire State, a ruling elder, in reading the report of a certain church, gave the minister's salary and donations as sixteen hundred dollars.

"What 's that?" inquired one of the divines present. "What is your pastor's salary?"

"Salary and donations, sixteen hundred dollars."

"I am not inquiring about donations, but about the salary."

"A thousand dollars."

"Put it down so, then."

"But how shall the donations be reported?"

One suggested under the head of "Miscellaneous"; another, "Ministerial Relief"; when an elder, in a grave tone but with a merry twinkle of his eye, proposed, "Enter it in the column, 'Support of the Church Poor.'"

When will people learn "that justice is better than donation, and that the principle of work and wages is holier than that of pious mendicancy"?

VII

THE PASTOR'S VACATION

"MINISTERS never used to have a vacation" is an argument with many. "Why should there be a change in the order of things?"

Such persons fail to realize how much greater and more constant is the pressure upon clergymen in these days of activity, and that seasons of entire freedom from care, and of recreation, are a kind of safety-valve for hard brain-workers. Says one of large experience:

"Every clergyman should, on his settlement, reserve the right of four or six Sundays of each year, as a ministerial vacation. To many men this rest is indispensable, and to all it will be beneficial. It is not any more the interest of the clergyman than of his parish. They will obtain more work, and better, out of ten or eleven months than out of the full twelve. This necessity of rest is universal. And it is urgent in proportion to the cerebral excitement which men are obliged to undergo. Upon no other class of men is there a strain brought more severe or more continuous than upon clergymen in large towns and cities. To say that lawyers, physicians, and merchants are severely taxed is only to bring them under the same necessity.

"If one will have good work one must have good tools, and to have good tools one must be allowed to sharpen them. Vacation is a true whetstone, on which overtaxed men sharpen their faculties for better work."

Read what one of our pastors writes to an editor:

"When the weekly calls were made and duties done, when sermons were ready for Sunday, and the wife in her short recess between the two weeks was reading your letter from the Springs, dear brother, our thoughts have wandered perverse. We have contemplated the pleasure of a yearly visit to Saratoga; the exhilaration of a mountain climb, with care flung to the winds; the invigoration of a week at the seaside. We have calculated expenses until our head has been in an arithmetical maze. We have wondered if we were yet in the gall of bitterness, because some way these charming letters from A, B, and C set our hearts aching over early fading wives and impossible impossibilities. None the less we rejoice with them. They are faithful workers, men of humblest and most sympathizing spirit, and we are glad in their prosperity.

"It is not strange if, in the course of our meditations, we have pondered much on the question, What should be the minister's hire? Does he need a vacation? Excess of work and lack of recreation are wearing out ministerial stock disproportionately fast. There has been a great change in public sentiment within a few years; yet there is room for further progress. This report of good things for the minority serves by contrast to make the 'shady' side still shadier. Enlightened New England even abounds in parishes, scattered among her hills and vales, where the demand for a vacation, or a salary which should cover the expenses of a vacation, would be presumption quite unpardonable. One society urges against it that the former minister lived to a good old age without any yearly vacation; and if he, why not in these days? It is overlooked that these are days of tenfold activity, as compared with the former times. We work faster, think faster, live faster.

"Another society pleads that, however desirable a vacation might seem, the watchman on the walls of Zion should be ever at his post. We need not bring up the hackneyed illustration of the bow always bent.

"Still another committee responds coldly to the plea for a vacation, *We* have none; why should the minister fare better than we? Simply, friends, because his work is more wearing. You, with your stirring business life, or your farming, or your mechanical labor, have no conception of the wear and tear of nerve there is in what seems to you so easy. The minister is a brain-worker. His labor is not completed at four, six, or nine o'clock. The burden rests on him day and night. He renders an unintermitting service of watchfulness and responsibility. His life, even with most faithful pastoral labor, must be largely sedentary and introverted. Hence a tendency toward morbid views, toward undue sensitiveness and depression, peculiar to his position. The minister does not ask to 'fare' better than you. It is yours to see that he fares as well.

"A fourth society says: 'If the minister wants a vacation, let him take it.' This sounds well, bating a little dryness in the wording. But have you made it possible? The mass of those in the ministry, though their labor may not be one whit behind in joy and blessedness, are not abundantly endowed, nor even comfortably, in any sense in which a man of business would use the term. To make both ends meet when staying at home they count prosperity. There is many a minister of the Gospel denying himself, to actual hunger, books, clothes, and all but necessaries, to keep his son in college; many a minister's wife eking out with pen or needle the means to educate a daughter, who will testify to this. Nay, *they* will not; the facts testify."

A country pastor, whose salary had been cut down by the parish as an expedient for paying a church debt, could not make use of his stipulated vacation because he had no money for traveling expenses. He sought in vain for opportunities to supply vacant pulpits in the season of vacation, as they were filled by distinguished ministers or professors, who were enjoying their annual rest. It so chanced that an old classmate, who was passing his vacation in a neighboring town, made Mr. B—— a visit. He could not help seeing how he was cramped, and, by dint of many inquiries, he apprehended the situation. Willingly accepting Mr. B——'s invitation to preach, without a hint to any one he announced as his text, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." It was a plain, outspoken discourse, in which, after setting forth the labors of the faithful minister, and his love and devotion to his people, he spoke of their duties toward him. Telling them of the generosity of his own parish, he alluded to cases where it was different, and then gave them Mr. B——'s story, as an instance showing how thoughtlessly his people had transferred their burdens from their own shoulders to his. Although he gave no names, they could not help putting on the cap that fitted them so well. A great commotion was produced, and some were quite angry; but they had too much good sense to retain such feelings. A sum was at once raised and presented to their pastor, with the request that he should appropriate it for his vacation. And not long after his original salary was restored. It should be added that his considerate friend suggested Mr. B——'s name to his own parish for the remaining Sabbaths of his absence, and that his preaching was acceptable to the people as well as a benefit to himself.

Will not other ministers of wealthy parishes suggest the names of some country pastors as a suitable supply for at least a part of their vacations? And will not parish committees sometimes look out a little on such occasions for these worthy laborers in the corners and by-places of the great vineyard? I think they would, if they realized the good they would thus do.

"But the people are accustomed to such eloquence that they would not tolerate ordinary supplies." Let us hope that this is an unjust impression. For, if parishes would only look at all sides of the subject, I believe they would cheerfully submit to the small sacrifice it would cost them. And the traveling ministers and professors who are so much in demand might sometimes work to the same end.

I have known cases of this, where a clergyman or professor in the receipt of a good salary has refrained from seeking vacant pulpits in his vacation, solely on account of those in greater need. Instead of this, he would preach for some of these hard-working country pastors, thus giving them needed help. This is bearing another's burdens.

"We believe," one remarks, "that there are few ministers who could not find a complete change of air, scene, and thought on a very moderate sum, and who would not repay the outlay to their people a hundred-fold. At all events, if the minister is a good man it would be safe to trust him with that 'moderate sum' and let him make the experiment."

VIII

FINALLY, BRETHREN

YOUR minister is called, installed, welcomed to your sanctuary and your homes, settled in his parsonage, and ready to go about the work to which you have summoned him. It is quite worth while for you to pause for a moment on the threshold of this pastorate, and think it all over and make up your mind what you are going to do about it. It is quite safe to say that the pleasantness, the fruitfulness, and the permanency of this relation depends on you quite as much as on him.

The thoughtful observer finds much that is curious in the rise, decline, and fall of the pastorates in many of our Protestant churches. If Agur the son of Jakeh had lived in our day, he would have added, I am sure, to the four things too wonderful for him, this fifth one; namely, the way of a church with a minister. It is one of the things that no philosopher ever can find out — what produces the violent likings and the violent dislikes, and the violent changes from liking to disgust with which some churches are affected in their relation to their ministers. One sees but little reason oftentimes for the antipathy with which the relation ended, or even for the idolatry with which it began, and wonders which was the greater illusion.

The critical period of any pastorate is apt to set in about the close of the second year. At first, all goes on swimmingly; the new voice in the pulpit, the new ways of putting things, the new mental habit and equipment, the new methods of work, awaken the attention and engage the interest of the people; in some respects the new pastor is an improvement on his predecessor, and the people are inclined to make the most of these superiorities; he is found to be so good that they idealize him, attributing to him powers and perfections that he does not possess. By and by the glamour vanishes, and the man begins to appear in his true character. He has his defects as well as his superiorities; his aridities as well as his freshnesses; his foibles as well as his virtues.

He is not perfect; he does not possess some of the good qualities he was imagined to possess; it begins to be suspected by some that their doll is stuffed with sawdust. By a natural reaction the overestimate is followed by an underestimate; and this, as I said, is quite likely to break out about the end of the second year, though the period of incubation is sometimes longer and sometimes shorter. Like that philosophical old lady who had observed that when she lived through March she always lived all the rest of the year, I have noticed that if a pastor gets through his second year and well on into his third year without any serious alienations or disturbances in his parish, he is likely to have smooth sailing for some time to come. The roots of bitterness, that cause the final disruption of the pastorate, are likely to spring up in the period of disillusion that succeeds first love.

Let me, therefore, hang up this cautionary signal. Do not overestimate your pastor at the beginning, and then you will not be so likely to underestimate him a little farther on. He is probably a little less perfect than some of you think him now; he is probably a little nearer perfect than some of you will think him by and by. Scale down your enchantment, and discount your disappointment. "Ephraim," said the prophet, "is a cake not turned"— raw on the one side, scorched on the other. Let your affection for your pastor shun these perilous extremes.

Having offered this one word of caution, let me condense into two or three short maxims the rest of what I have to say. And,

First. Give your minister room. Give him room for his thinking. If he is, as we trust, a scribe who has been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven, he will bring forth out of his treasure things new and old. Old faiths will appear to him in a new light, and he will show them to you in his teaching in forms unfamiliar. Look through the forms to the realities that they contain. Do not make him an offender for a phrase. Some liberty of statement every teacher needs; do not grudge it to your minister. His teaching will be all the more catholic and careful — doubt it not — if he knows that his people trust his judgment as a teacher.

Second. Give him room to work. Do not make void his generalship by your traditions. He has plans of his own; he is leader and organizer now; let him develop his methods in his own way.

Third. Do not try to pen him within your own parish. He belongs to the community; many interests that do not center in your meeting-house ought to engage his thought; it is not your work but the Lord's work, to which you have called him; and whatever he can do for the furtherance of truth and righteousness in the world should increase your joy.

Fourth. Do not give your pastor too much room to work in. Sometimes the people are willing to let the pastor have the whole field to himself. They have hired him not to direct but to do the work of the parish. He seems to be willing to work, and they are willing that he should. They are careful not to get in his way. They leave to him not only the teaching of the pulpit, but the entire care and labor of the parish. They expect him to know everybody, to conciliate everybody, to serve everybody, to set everybody to work, whether they will work or no; to promote parish fellowship among people who do not speak to their brethren and sisters when they meet them on the street; to lead missionary enterprises, when there are none who will follow his lead; to develop benevolence among men and women whose stinginess is chronic and incorrigible. Remember that the power of a church is in the working membership; and that your minister's happiness and usefulness will depend on the degree of coöperation that he secures from you.

Fifth. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Talk with your minister freely about the problems of your own spiritual life that you are trying to work out. Do not go to him with mere speculative puzzles, but if there be any questions of your own higher experience on which you need light or have found light, confer with him about them. The best sermons that any minister preaches are those whose themes are found in the experience of his people. Do not tell him that his sermons are profound, or masterly, or eloquent, or beautiful, even though they may be so — if he likes such praise he would better do without it; but if his teachings have helped you, by making truth or duty plainer, or by giving you comfort or strength or peace, let him know that.

If there be any thoughts of kindness in your heart toward your pastor, or any purpose of helping him, do not delay too long shaping them in word and deed. How many pastorates there are whose graves are covered with the costliest and sweetest flowers! How often the minister staggers on year after year under a burden too heavy for him, spending his strength for his people, wishing that they would lighten his load a little, yet feeling that when he makes the heaviest sacrifices they regard him as an unprofitable servant, who is only doing what it is his duty to do, till at length the burden becomes unsupportable, and he lays it down. Then the appreciation that he has needed all along begins to find expression — then, when it is too late. I have sometimes thought at funerals that if half of the kind things that are said of the departed while the crape flutters on the bell-knob had been said to him while he was yet in the flesh he might have lived many years longer. And, in like manner, if the grateful words, tearful tributes, and generous proffers with which the resignation of the pastoral office is often greeted had been distributed over the previous years, the resignation would not have been written.

Brethren, the relation into which you have now entered with the pastor of your choice is among the most dear and sacred of earthly relations. This servant of God will be the counselor and guide and friend of many; the sorrows, the anxieties, the perils of many will lie always heavily upon his heart; there will be no day that does not make heavy drafts upon his sympathies; the welfare of his congregation will be in his thought, waking or sleeping, journeying or abiding at home. It is not a small thing to have the care of five hundred or a thousand souls. Lighten his burden all you can; take the obstacles — as many of them as you can — out of his way; stand by him loyally in word and deed; follow him, even as he follows Christ; pray for him not merely with well-worn phrases in public places, but heartily in secret; and peradventure, as the days go on, the friendship now consecrated shall grow stronger and purer and fuller of blessing to you and to him — an undying flame that shall shine through the dark of time and add its own bright, unfading ray to the glories of eternity.

IX

GETTING RID OF THE PASTOR

IT would be difficult to determine where the responsibility of the present transient pastorates belongs. There are uneasy people with whom the old proverb, "A new broom sweeps clean," is a cardinal doctrine. Fully satisfied during the first few weeks and months of a fresh pastorate, they soon become equally dissatisfied.

John Ploughman once said: "I never knew a good horse which had not some odd habit or other; and I never yet saw a minister worth his salt who had not some crotchet or oddity. Now, these are the bits of cheese that cavilers smell out and nibble at: this man is too slow, and another too fast; the first is too flowery, and the second too dull. Dear me! if all God's creatures were judged in this way, we should wring the dove's neck for being too tame, shoot the robins for eating spiders, kill the cows for swinging their tails, and the hens for not giving us milk. When a man wants to beat a dog, he can soon find a stick; and at this rate any fool may have something to say against the best minister in England."

And there are uneasy ministers who, in a new field, work admirably for a time, but are hardly acquainted with their parish before they begin to desire a change.

Now, if both parties would remember, what they thoroughly know, that while in this mortal life they will certainly have a call to bear and forbear, that though they change the place they will still keep the pain, they would often agree to overlook little frictions and unpleasantness, and in a general harmony of spirit work on together. Suppose the conjugal compact could be lightly set aside, what a perpetual rush would there be of uneasy husbands and wives seeking to make new experiments!

In the primitive mode of settlement for life, the very permanence of the relation led the parties to accommodate themselves to it. But the grace of forbearance seems to have gone out of date. Nowadays many a parish soon grows weary of its pastor and is not long in making this known. Sometimes the people starve him away, cutting down his salary, or withholding it more and more till he is driven to leave for the lack of bread. Sometimes the whispering spirit creeps through the parish. In a private, entirely confidential way, this is commented upon, that is taken exception to, and the other is strongly found fault with, though secretly, of course. Thus a feeling of dissatisfaction, slight in the beginning, is whispered into general circulation. A little breeze, originated by three or four, possibly by one, is fanned into a great parish wind which sweeps the parson clean away. Sometimes one or two leading men leave the society because the minister's views are too radical, and one or two more because they are not radical enough; and losing this support, the society concludes that the minister himself had better leave.

Says a venerable pastor: "After the outbreak of the late rebellion, I was deserted by two of my wealthy parishioners, one on the pretense that I did not discourse on politics, the other on the pretense that I did discourse on politics." Yet this pastor, says the narrator, had uttered so many rapturous words on the joy of living elevated above the world, that he was not imagined to be grieved by this desertion of his lifelong friends.

Now, whether it is more merciful to starve or to worry a man out of his parish, it might be difficult even for himself to decide. As this is a question upon which even a "Daniel come to judgment" might find it hard to give an answer, I am inclined to give in full a discussion which appeared some time ago in the New-York "Evangelist," leaving every man to settle for himself which of the courses he should prefer to take.

"Why is it that getting rid of a minister ofttimes works such mischief in a church, and usually wounds a minister's feelings so deeply? Because almost invariably the congregation, from real delicacy of feeling,—from a natural dislike to say disagreeable things to a person's face,—do the very things that should not be done. Here is a minister who may be good enough—and woe to that unfortunate preacher of whom his people say, 'He is a good man—but.' However, in this case he *is* a good man. Yet from some of the thousand-and-one causes that may render a minister objectionable, his people have become dissatisfied, and desire his removal Now what is usually done? The people, very naturally dreading to tell these things to the man's face, try to crowd him out by making his position so uncomfortable that he will not want to stay. The minister soon learns that something is wrong. What it is he does not know, and cannot discover — the very uncertainty and mystery adding to his distress. He hears of wars and rumors of wars. He learns that certain persons whom he thought his best friends, and who are so in his presence, have 'said something.' He is made more and more uncomfortable, till at last he leaves — wounded, hurt, feeling that his people have been cruel and false-hearted, while the probability is that they have been neither, but merely lacked the moral courage and common sense to tenderly explain the situation to the minister himself.

"Let us see just what rights a congregation have in this matter, and what they should do.

"A church is in need of a minister, and the people, in finding one, have a right to their peculiarities of mind and taste — to their likes and dislikes. They built the church, they intend to support the minister, and they have a perfect right to be suited. They hear candidates, try faithfully, and finally call and settle the man they think will acceptably fill the place. In a year they find they were mistaken. Their minister may be a good man, he may be admirably fitted for some other church and people, but in this particular church he is a failure. His people are as much disappointed as he is. They wanted him to be a success, but he is not, and they are dissatisfied. They don't like his manner, or his mode of preaching. Perhaps they think he has not the talent they would like and are willing to pay for. (I assume that this church is one of those rare exceptions that does not expect first-class talent at second-class prices.) At all events the people do not like him, and would be pleased to hear that he had been called to another church. The congregation have a perfect right to want this; but now what course should they pursue? Should they through long months merely try to make their minister unhappy, hoping he will finally grow so wretched as to take his departure? Should the people say things behind his back, which they trust will in some way reach his ears, increasing his pain, and his desire of finding another church? No. These things, though usually done, are exactly what should not be done. What, then, are the steps to take?

"Is it settled that the minister must leave? Yes, decidedly. Well, then, there must be in the congregation some really pious man, with common sense, who has the welfare of both church and minister at heart. Let that man acquaint himself with the true condition of affairs — let him be able to represent the mind of the people; and then, with all tenderness, but with perfect plainness of speech, let him tell the minister the whole story.

"Under the circumstances, a minister would be thankful that so straightforward a course had been pursued. To be sure, it would occasion some pain, but by no means would it equal the pain caused by the usual 'crowd-ing-out' process. Such a mode of dealing with the matter would call for some nerve; but is it not the better way? And is not the desired end — the removal of the minister — accomplished with at least mutual respect, and with comparatively little or no hard feeling? 'But,' says some one, 'we should hate to do this. Why, we could n't tell the minister right to his face that we wanted him to leave, or that we did n't think him smart enough. It would hurt his feelings too much; better let him find it out gradually.'

"A Parable. — Once upon a time there was a very kind-hearted little boy, who owned a dog. He was deeply attached to the animal, and yet, notwithstanding his love, our little friend became convinced — such are the strange contradictions in human nature — that the dog's tail needed shortening. To be sure, the operation would occasion a deal of pain; but the tail was unsatisfactory (to the boy), and that was sufficient; it must come off. But here the tender-heartedness of the child rose beautifully to view. He felt that to cut it all off at once would occasion too much pain; and so, because he shrank from unnecessarily hurting the feelings of the dog, he concluded to cut it off an inch a day till the desired length was 'gradually' attained. Now I fearlessly affirm that if that dog's tail *had to come off,* it would have been far less exasperating to have it off at once, and not at the rate of an inch a day. *Verbum sap.!*"

To this spicy communication the following response was made:

"*Mr. Editor:* The article of your correspondent in "The Evangelist" of last week says some true things, but omits one most important item. He speaks as though congregations *as a whole* become dissatisfied, and unitedly, and as one man, go to work to get rid of ministers. Now the fact, in nine cases out of ten, is that *some few* (and very often those few persons of no great influence) begin the dissatisfaction, and then take pains to represent, or rather *mis*represent, others as dissatisfied, when the very reverse is true. And then on these false representations one and another of more influence are ready to say: 'Well, I did not know of any dissatisfaction, and for my part I am perfectly satisfied; but then *if* others, as you say, feel so, why, perhaps, we had better have a change.' And so, instead of boldly and faithfully acting out their own views, and sustaining a minister who is laborious and faithful, they either fall in with the rising current, or stand aside and do nothing, and suffer an excellent minister to leave his people; when if they would but use their influence and sustain a faithful servant of the Master, the discontent would soon be at an end, and those who had started and endeavored to fan it would sink to their proper insignificance.

"I have known many cases of separation between ministers and people, and the history of almost all is given above. There are very few congregations in the land where dissatisfaction cannot be *created* by going round and asking: 'Don't you think we had better have a change?' 'Don't you think our minister's usefulness is declining?' 'Don't you think some new voice and manner would better fill up our pews?' When if the same officious inquirer had gone round proposing to raise a sum of money and make a present to the minister, or kindly offer him a vacation to recruit his wearied brain and body and heart, the result would have been the very reverse, calling out the love of the people to the faithful ambassador of Christ, and preparing them to hear with fresh interest the Word of God from his lips.

"The truth is, in nine cases out of ten, that dissatisfaction with ministers arises from the fact that the church is growing cold and inactive and neglectful of duty; and instead of looking into their own hearts and repenting of sin, and waking to new activity in the cause of religion, and so encouraging the heart of the minister, they lay the blame of the decline on him, and look to a change as the remedy."

Another letter, signed "John Knox, Jr.," treats the topic from another point of view:

"I have read the letter of your correspondent with much interest. Of course those churches that are crushing out the lives of ministers, in the foolish and wrong methods of lingering torture which they so unwisely adopt when they desire to get rid of them, will now know how to act, seeing that we all comprehend what should be the direct, prompt, and effective method. It is a pity that he had not written his prescription many years ago, for it might have aided a party in a church with which I have some acquaintance, who earnestly desired to get rid of their minister; *and they did exactly as your correspondent has prescribed.* They called a minister of whom they 'had heard favorably,' and of whom 'on trial' they had good 'hopes.' Ere long, however, there were certain in the church, and they were leaders too, that had been accustomed to rule with a high hand, who began to suspect that they had made a 'mistake.' They hinted their doubts to others, and ere long a number were started to talk, and watch, and as the band increased, courage and a sense of duty increased also, and after a solemn conclave, a leader undertook to approach the pastor, and let him know what these faithful guardians felt, and what was expected of him.

"He did so. 'So you think I don't answer the church.' 'Yes! We are fully satisfied, and after trial, we see that we can no longer work with you.' 'Oh, that is your judgment. How many think with you in your estimate?' 'Oh, a large number, and I have come to say that I and all these people desire a change.' 'Well,' said the pastor, 'that is plain, and I shall be equally plain. Now do you get about your business; leave the church or I 'll turn you out of it, and I 'll turn out or discipline every man and woman in the church that dares to interfere with me in my ministry. Go at once, or you will repent it.' The minister forthwith cleared out some forty of these disturbers, who, had they been permitted to have their own way,

> by a timorous, nervous man, would have kept that pastor, and probably his successor, in torment for many years. He made them feel that they had a man to deal with. For twenty years he has sustained that church, and brought it up to a condition of intelligence, numbers, liberality, and piety that places it in the front rank of the churches of his presbytery. There are some men of delicate temperaments who are ever ready to act on hints, and there are others just as able to *give* hints to the emissaries of disturbers when they come to dictate to men who are able to teach them."

This correspondence will be found profitable for doctrine and reproof by many church members, perhaps by some pastors. It is related of Dr. Neale, forty years pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston, that soon after his settlement he told his people that "for no slight cause of discontent would he be driven from them. If there were a third in the church and society who loved him, and another third were willing to put up with him, the remaining third *should* bear with him"; or, according to another version, "It will be very difficult for you to unsettle me, for if one-third wish me to stay, and another third would n't vote against me, the remaining third may whistle." For more than thirty-six years the good doctor held the three-thirds with a firm and loving hand. He is also said to have stated that one reason for his long pastorate was that when he got on his high horse and wanted to go, they would n't let him; and when they took their turn of mounting, he would n't go. Thus he owed his protracted continuance among them to the fact that "they did n't both get mad at the same time."

On this subject, which tries the souls of so many clergymen, a well-known minister writes:

> "Wherever you go in New England you find that in almost every church a minority exists, and that owing to the conduct of this minority the church is kept in a constant turmoil and unprofitable agitation. And the time has come — so widespread and notorious is this state of things — to look into the matter closely and fearlessly, and to ascertain, if possible, the cause and remedy of what is fast becoming unendurable to the pastors and a scandal upon religion itself.
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> "The first thing to be noted about minorities is that they are most frequently formed and marshaled in the name of religion. Any amount of wire-pulling and caucusing is being done in our churches, detrimental to their peace and growth, by a class of men who mask their selfish and ill-

natured design behind the veil of an excessive piety. The attack is often against the pastor and in the name of 'sound doctrine.' It is astonishing how wise theologically some laymen are, especially if they hold some small office in the church. They act as if they were elected to be censors of the pulpit, and supply it from week to week with the needed measure of knowledge, in order that the people need not be led astray. You can find men in every church who never studied either of the two languages in which the Scriptures were written, who know next to nothing about ancient geography and oriental history, whose profoundest reading has been Barnes's Commentaries, who feel competent to sit in judgment week by week upon the utterances of men who devoted eight or ten years of their lives to prepare themselves to preach their first sermon, and who have very likely since spent twice that number of years in close unintermittent study of the Scriptures.

"Another cause of the minority party in our churches is love of power or the spirit of domination. In almost every church are men who love to rule. They crave prominence in spiritual things. They are determined to have their own way. They desire to be elected to the office of deacon, or to be put on some committee, or be sent as delegate somewhere. If they do not succeed in these ignoble ambitions, they are soured and become crabbed and ugly. They begin to button-hole the weak brethren and canvass the church for opposition votes. They misquote and misapply the pastor's words. They start a dozen rumors; they become the center and origin of discontent. They have secret conferences and organize a party. They drive the Spirit from the church; and out of the spiritual barrenness that they themselves have wickedly caused derive their strongest arguments 'for a change.' The pastor endures it as long as he can, until, fretted and weary with the unhallowed strife, he resigns his charge and retires, grieved and wounded in heart, from the field.

"Now, every reader knows that this sort of thing prevails to a greater or less extent all over New England and the country. It has done more, and is to-day doing more, than all other causes combined, to imperil the pastoral relation and make it of short continuance. And the question comes home directly to us all who wish well to the cause of Christ and desire a fruitful and peaceful state of things, What shall we do with fractious minorities in our churches, and with those wicked men who deliberately and persistently organize them? I say 'wicked men,' and I speak with deliberation and accuracy when I thus apply the term.

"It is time that this class of mischief-makers in our congregations should understand that they are engaged in a wicked and unjustifiable business. A church is a family, and it is an awful sin for one to break into and destroy its peace, check its growth, and rudely displace its legitimate head. For one, I hold that the time has come to call white white, and black black. These miserable people embody the very spirit of disorganization and strife, and should receive, as they deserve, the bold rebuke of pulpit and pew. The truth is the churches have been derelict touching this matter. They have treated as a minor fault what is in fact a positive and flagrant transgression, not only of the law of brotherly love, which the Bible makes the evidence of true piety, but of the very genius of Christianity, and a sin against the Holy Ghost.

"This also should be said in addition, that the abuse of the minority privilege is a direct and deadly blow at Congregationalism as a system of church government. If our form of government means anything, it means that the majority of the suffrages shall decide all matters relating to the administration, both in respect to the parish society and the church proper. And this is the same as saying that a minority shall yield gracefully and amiably to the decision of the majority. There is no other basis upon which Congregationalism can stand. It is the essential and imperative principle of the system, upon the maintenance of which peace and order depend. But what often are the facts of the case? These: that only provided the minority, no matter how small, is ugly and persistent enough, it can carry the day, drive out the pastor, and upset the whole administration. The premium is thus put upon discontent, mischief-makers are encouraged to persist in their mischief-making, and a feeling of timidity and dread allowed to take possession of the entire ministry; and many a Congregational minister has gone over to the Presbyterian denomination, in order to obtain security in labor and protection to his reputation.

"That minorities have their rights we are well aware, but that among these is the right to disturb the peace of the church and torment the pastor, we most emphatically deny. It is the duty of the minority when outvoted to yield gracefully, and accept the decision of the church, as expressed in the votes of the majority, in cheerfulness and affectionate compliance, and not persist in a course of action in which the majority of the brethren cannot sympathize."

This witness speaks from the Congregational stand-point, but the substance of what he says is applicable to churches of other names. The drift of his remarks, and, indeed, of this chapter, is against those unreasonable, self-willed minorities which, by the reckless pressing of their demands, sorely harass the minister, not unfrequently compelling his retreat, while they keep the church in a perpetual turmoil. Indeed, a majority clearly in the right, from the fear of losing certain large subscriptions, will sometimes basely truckle to the will and the wealth of one, two, or three, thus selling their pastor for a little silver.

But it is by no means claimed that majorities are always in the right: witness that unhappily notorious one which drove President Edwards from Northampton. Many other similar cases are on record, which only go to show that human crookedness can twist the straightest things that human wisdom can make.

To be in the minority is not, therefore, necessarily to be in the wrong; else what of the "few" who go in at the strait and narrow gate? But there is always the right to appeal to a Mutual Council, the Presbytery, or some other body. And if *this* sanctions wrong, there remains the right of patient Christlike endurance till the Grand Assizes, when all crooked things shall be made straight, and all wrongs shall be finally and forever righted.

II

PARISH BUSINESS

I

OBJECTS, METHODS, AND DIFFICULTIES

FIRST. I am asked to state the principles of chief importance to the successful conduct of parish business. Let us approach the subject with a full recognition of the fact that the object of all parish business is the promotion of religion in the hearts and lives of those who may be within its influence, including ourselves. It seems to me not too much to say that this is the sole and only object. We may enlist other motives and interests to advance the work, but the moment any purpose other than the promotion of religion becomes the object, or a part of the object, weakness and danger of mischief is introduced. Thus, to serve this paramount object it is perfectly proper to take advantage of the desire of real estate-owners to have a valuable improvement made by building a church; to take advantage of the preference of families for a church convenient to their homes and attractive in its appointments; of the social friendships of the parishioners; of the disposition of people to follow each other, and to be willing to work and to give together as they would not alone; but the usefulness of these and similar motives is in their actually serving the one object which is not only superior to but must control them all. When we find ourselves using religion or its institutions to serve those incidental objects, instead of making them serve it, we are making a mistake which is perhaps sadly frequent, and certainly frequently pernicious.

In considering, therefore, the principles that should be observed in the transaction of church affairs, let us bear in mind that their importance is in their value in promoting religion; and that the obligation to do such business rightly is enhanced by the mischiefs which neglect and unnecessary controversy bring upon the sacred cause.

The reasons why church business should be exceptionally well conducted are as obvious as the fact of common laxity. A man in secular business may neglect that which is less profitable for that which is more so, and may take risks, and himself bear the loss of misjudgment, but in the business of the church such loss falls on the cause of Christ.

Second. The most useful suggestion I can make, of which all the rest I have to say is but the application in detail, is that the business affairs and engagements of the parish should be undertaken and carried out as sacred trusts, with all the exactness, fairness, and fidelity that can be expected in the acts of any trustee. The church should enlist the service of men who appreciate the responsibility of the duty, who know how to transact business in a way which will not leave the door open to controversy, and who will not allow personal interests or morbidly sensitive feelings to swerve them from the course of Christian duty; and it should honor their cautious and deliberate ways, and respect the objections that such men instinctively make to assuming doubtful powers and neglecting proper formalities. Doubtless the serious controversies that arise in church business are very few in proportion to the number of organizations and the interests involved, when we compare them with those of business corporations, but they are far too numerous, and they nearly all get their opportunity of becoming serious by the loose condition of rights and obligations which unbusinesslike methods have produced. There have been some great contests over the questions of faith or discipline that have rent churches, but if I am not mistaken, in the majority of cases, church quarrels, however apparently due to moral or spiritual questions, could not have gained the position in which to give the church a serious wound, but for the neglect of ordinary business precautions. So far, certainly, as the business of the parish is concerned, the peace of the church depends on the course which is morally right *being taken in a legal manner*—a manner the legality of which is sufficiently clear to prevent objections that may be made the opportunity of dissensions.

Third. There are here two difficulties which ordinary business does not meet. The peculiar organization of a church makes its business in some respects more complex, and increases the importance of regularity, while on the other hand it seems to church members ungracious to object to irregularity in performance of labors that are gratuitous; and the prevalence of good feeling silences doubts.

What I have to say will be directed to explaining the nature of the peculiarities which a business man should bear in mind in undertaking to coöperate in parish affairs. The embarrassment that attends the attempt to exact more careful performance of the business of a parish requires unfailing resources of faithfulness and forbearance, combined with the good humor that ought to overflow in any differences of judgment in this service.

II

ORGANIZATION, SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR

FIRST. Suppose a number of persons unite to form a church, with no other organization than choosing a pastor and a committee or board of the usual officers, and thereupon money is contributed to a common treasury; to whom does that money belong? It is easy to say that it is dedicated to the cause of religion, but this is saying where it ought to go, not who has a legal right to take it if controversy arises. If the legal right is made clear at the outset, controversy may arise, but will quiet itself. If it is not clear, controversy is the more likely to arise on that account, and litigation is likely to ensue.

It is plain that such a fund does not belong to the members, or ought not to, in the sense in which the property of a business corporation does, for the property of a church member is liable to his creditors, and at his death goes to his next of kin, like that of any other person; and if I own a share of the money in the treasury of my church, my administrators would be bound to claim it on my death; my creditors, if I had any, might attach it. Moreover, if I wished to leave the church I might assign my share to another person; or, if there were an unappeasable dissension in the society, I might claim a dissolution of it and a division of its funds.

In the case of an unincorporated church, which I have supposed, the answer to the question, Who owns the funds? is obvious, but not very favorable to the peace of the church.

The fund is held in trust: it belongs to the members only in the sense that they are concerned in its administration. Who, then, has power to protect this fund? If the treasurer misapplies it, must all the members join in suing for it? If the highway commissioners want to take a strip off the church lot, must all the members be consulted, or is it enough to serve notice on the committee or board; and, if the latter, is it enough that the committee consent, or are the members entitled to be consulted about taking their property. If there is a fire, and it becomes necessary to sue to recover the insurance, who can do it?

Such questions as these, which are constantly arising when a church has property, compel the adoption of incorporation, so as to provide a hand clothed with the law, to hold and protect the property.

Second. The property and the legal rights of a church are, however, subordinate facts in its existence. They demand attention only because they are to be so held as to serve the spiritual uses of the body. Those spiritual purposes also require some formal organization. The pastor and preacher has his advisers, his aids and assistants; and their several duties and their relations to the worship in the congregation, to the communicants, to the children in the Sunday-school, to the poor and sick, form a religious organization the functions of which are sacred.

We instinctively feel that the duty of the spiritual part of the work of the parish is in its nature different from that of the secular or temporal part. This becomes even more obvious when we notice the details of the spiritual work which the church undertakes.

The primary idea of a church in all of its various forms is that of an organization for religious purposes, the members, the officers, and the pastor or other head of which are bound together by a spiritual tie, and are to be guided in their relations with each other by religious principles. In the formation of this union, in the continuance of it, or its dissolution by dismissal or excommunication, in the watch and care involved in the relation, and in the duties of service and contribution, the persons engaged are not directed by the law of the land, but by their own covenant and religious principles, and by those rules and usages which are known as ecclesiastical law. And if a member, officer, or pastor is derelict in duty, this law of the church is looked to for the method of correcting the evil. In all this the work of the church may go on within its legitimate limits without reference to the law of the land. The law of the land does not interfere with the discipline and teachings of the church or the confession and worship of its members; for this work is innocent and beneficent, and the church, in its teachings, confessions, worship, and discipline, does not invoke the law of the land, because its own religious rules are its guide.

Now, we have seen that so soon as such an organization has any property or makes a contract, and this is often at the very beginning of its existence, it avowedly assumes legal rights and legal obligations. In respect to these it must, of necessity, order its conduct according to the requirements of the law of the land; and it cannot, as in the case of discipline and worship, be secure merely by resting upon its religious principles. Its title-deeds, its building contract, its insurance of its edifice and its organ, its contract with the sexton, even the contract with the minister, must of necessity conform to the same legal standards that the law imposes upon like transactions in worldly affairs. It cannot rely on spiritual obligations for securing a clear title, a good foundation and a tight roof, nor does the ecclesiastical law provide means for enforcing payment of insurance in case of a fire. Such interests and obligations constitute the temporalities of the church. They exist for the support of the spiritualities. They are, however, only a means to an end.

Every church has thus two very different kinds of business to attend to. Difference of opinion exists as to whether they may best be administered by the same persons or by different sets of persons. In some denominations one organization attends to both; in others there is a separate organization for each. Some persons think the pastor should have nothing to do with the finances; others think it wrong to exclude him from them.

Without desiring here to discuss the question, it is well to say that it appears to me that Providence, who is wiser than all our ingenuity, has so allotted the causes of opinion and the dispositions of men, that there are, and for a long time to come are likely to be, many churches of each kind, some of the one form and some of the other, and some of a composite form, all engaged in the same object, but in different methods, and thus enlisting diverse gifts and aptitudes. Whether this be an advantage as I suppose, or not, the fact exists; and the reader who would understand parish business clearly should not fail to observe the difference between the principles which govern the two classes respectively; and even if his church is a single organization, he will be repaid for noticing the forms of organization in which these two classes of functions are separated.

Third. The tendency of ecclesiastical law, that is to say, of the Rules and Usages of Denominations, is to consider the "Church," in the special sense of that word (*i. e.*, the body of communicants or the priesthood with their lay assistants), competent to hold and manage the property as well as the ecclesiastical affairs, and therefore to rely on a single organization. But in several of the States the law permitting incorporation necessitates, for some denominations at least, a double organization, the communicants or spiritual body, however formed, being one, and the congregation or pewholders (some of whom may be and some of whom may not be "church members") constituting the other or secular body. The way this came about was that the legislature, to avoid bringing ecclesiastical questions before the courts, provided in effect that the incorporation of churches of some denominations, which had no great organized ecclesiastical tribunals, should be without any reference to their ecclesiastical connection or faith, and that the right to vote should not depend on "church membership," but on attendance and contribution. The courts following this policy have treated such corporations as purely secular bodies, existing, however, for the benefit of a religious body, or a religious purpose. Under this system, as has been humorously said, "every church is twins." The church members or the affiliated ecclesiastical organizations control on questions of worship and discipline, the congregation or pewholders and their trustees on questions of property and contracts. In the State of New-York and several other States substantially this system prevails as to independent churches and churches congregationally organized, including with more or less qualification the Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and Universalist churches. In several of these denominations the difference of preference as to the single or dual organization has led to the enactment of laws under which some of the local churches among these orders adopt one, and some the other form.*

As a type of the dual organization I take, as best suited for this illustration, the legal form given in the State of New-York to churches of the Presbyterian and most of those of the Baptist and Congregational order.†

Fourth. The peculiarities of the dual organization may perhaps be best explained by beginning with the formation of a religious corporation of this class.

In order that I may secure the clearness of accuracy, I will state the law in the form in which it exists in New-York; the original, which has been to a greater or less extent copied in such other States as have adopted the same system.

The first clause of the New-York statute is as follows:

> "It shall be lawful for the persons of full age, belonging to any other church, congregation or religious society [that is to say, any other than the Episcopal and Reformed Dutch, which were provided for by the preceding sections of the act], now or hereafter to be established in this State, and not already incorporated, to assemble at the church, meeting-house, or other place where they statedly attend for divine worship, and, by plurality of voices, to elect any number of discreet persons of their church, congregation or society, not less than three, nor exceeding nine in number, as trustees. . . ."

A subsequent clause of the same section provides that the persons certified by the officers of the meeting to have been elected as trustees shall upon the recording of the certificate "be a body corporate, by the name or title expressed in such certificate"; and by the next section they are "empowered to take into their possession and custody all the temporalities belonging to such church, congregation or society, whether the same consist of real or personal estate," etc., with power to sue for, recover, hold, and enjoy the church property, and to purchase, lease, and improve other property for the use of the church, congregation, or society, etc., and, in short, to take charge of the estate and property belonging thereto, and to transact all affairs relative to its temporalities.

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* In the State of New-York, where I write, the growth of opinion in favor of the single organization has been such within the last few years, that laws have been passed, at the instance of Baptists and Congregationalists respectively, making it optional with churches of those denominations to organize in the single form, by incorporating the church members only, and to change to that form, if originally organized in the dual form by incorporating the members of the congregation only.

† In this I speak of all churches organized under Section 3 of the Act (Chap. 60) of 1813.

It will be seen at once that this statute is permissive, not obligatory. They *may*. If any church desires to remain unincorporated and forego the temporal advantages of incorporation, they can do so.

Clauses relating to the mode of calling and conducting the meeting, and certifying and recording the result, should be carefully complied with by those proceeding to organize such a corporation. Many certificates have failed to give a legal right to the trustees, by reason of careless omission of some requisite, or by record in the wrong public office.

It only needs to be suggested here that the subject of name or title for the corporation is worth some thought wherever the communicants are organized separately from the congregation. If the corporation is called church, as "the first church of A," there is difficulty in teaching its members to distinguish between the spiritual body and the corporation. If the word "society" or "congregation" is used for the corporation, reserving the word "church" to designate the body of communicants, one source of confusion is avoided.

III

OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIP

FIRST. Other clauses of the statute we are considering empower the trustees to erect churches, meeting-houses, parsonages, schools, and other parish buildings; also "to make rules and orders for managing the temporal affairs of such church, congregation or society, and to dispose of all monies belonging thereto, and to regulate and order the renting the pews in their churches and meeting-houses, and the perquisites for the breaking of the ground in the cemetery or church-yards, and in the said churches and meeting-houses for burying of the dead, and all other matters relating to the temporal concerns and revenues of such church, congregation or society," etc. A clause in Section 8, however, withholds from the trustees the power to fix or ascertain the salary to be paid to a minister; but requires the vote of the congregation on that question.

It will be seen thus that the trustees are given entire control of the temporalities with the single exception of fixing the minister's salary, which is reserved to "the persons entitled to vote for trustees." The law goes even so far as to speak of the trustees as the corporation; but the courts have upon sound principles interpreted this to mean that they represent the corporation and exercise its general powers, like directors of a business corporation. On the other hand, they are given no power with respect to the spiritual relations of the church. They are not empowered to receive or dismiss or discipline members. The church is entirely independent of them in whatever it can do without money; and as we shall see, the trustees' power and duty to provide money is given that they may enable the church to do its spiritual work in its own way. The statute does not even require that there shall be any "church," in the sense of a definite body of communicants bound by a covenant or confession. It is enough to enable the formation and continuance of the corporation that there is a society or congregation. There are, however, other provisions of law the effect of which is that if there is such a body of communicants the trustees must administer the temporalities in accordance with the principles of the denomination to which the communicants belong.*

Trustees have not infrequently presumed upon the language of the statute, and claimed to be themselves the corporation, and to treat the constituency who elected them as merely individual beneficiaries entitled only to attend church and vote for trustees. But this is an error which can rarely fail to provoke difficulty. The trustees are simply the executive board in whom the exercise of the corporate powers is vested. They hold the corporate powers, but they hold them for the benefit of the body at large, in the same sense that the directors of a bank or railroad company hold as trustees of the corporation whose affairs they direct.

In other words, the trustees are vested with the powers which they hold to be exercised for the *benefit* of the congregation and according to the rules and usages of the denomination.

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* This rule, which secures the integrity of the trusts in which church property is held by preventing funds raised by one denomination for its own uses from being diverted by the secession of a church or its trustees to join another denomination or to become independent, is a sound principle of good faith, and has generally been recognized and enforced by the American courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States.

The courts of New-York at one time held that under the statute which we are now considering the control of the trustees was so unrestricted that if they employed a minister of another denomination or of no denomination, the courts could not interfere.

The perversions of church property which this extreme construction of the statute indirectly sanctioned led to the adoption in New-York, in 1875 and 1876, of statutes requiring the trustees to administer the temporalities, for the benefit of the corporation, according to the discipline, rules, and usages of the church or denomination to which the corporation or the church members of the corporation belong, and forbidding the diversion of the funds therefrom.

These statutes put an end to the exceptional powers of trustees of New-York societies in respect to church perversions, and brought the law of New-York into general harmony with the present law of most of the other States on this point.

The law of Massachusetts, in so far as it is peculiar, would, perhaps, not be of general interest here.

The "society" thus constituted and represented by the trustees is the external and legally recognized body of which the "church" is, so to speak, the soul or spirit.

The trustees being charged with the temporalities of the congregation, it rests with them to buy the lot and build the house; it is for them to furnish it and pay for the organ and furniture, and if they have the assistance of voluntary committees in so doing and money is raised by subscriptions or fairs, it is usually properly understood that in the absence of any different stipulation, such gifts become a part of the "temporalities" and belong to the trustees, for the congregation. It is for them to see to the insurance, to employ the sexton, to determine (but agreeably to the rules and usages of the denomination) whether the church edifice can be used for concerts and lectures, and even to decide when it is necessary to close it for repairs. It is for them to collect all revenues, that is to say, all moneys contributed to the *support* of the church, congregation, or society, and to pay the pastor's salary and the expenses of the music.

The questions whether they have any part in calling or dismissing the pastor, or in the direction of the music, bring us to the line between the powers of the trustees and the powers of the church. Whatever may be the answer, it is clear that in any case the legal contract, by which either pastor or choir is entitled to be paid, is with the trustees, or the corporation they represent, unless, indeed, some individual may choose to make himself responsible.

Second. Under this dual system, the "church," or spiritual body, is composed of those who have confessed their faith and their discipleship, and entered into a religious covenant with each other. Many members of the church are members of the society also; but it rarely happens that there are not many church members, who by reason of absence or not contributing to the financial support of the society, or being under age, are not members of the society; that is to say, not entitled to vote for trustees. On the other hand, there are usually many members of the society who are not communicants or members of the church.

Membership in the church depends on the consent of the church. The society have no control over the subject. Membership in the society depends on the statute. Neither the church nor the society have any control over that.

The church contains in its membership those whose faith dictates and directs the worship for the support of which the society and trustees are organized. The acts of worship, the public services, and the devotional meetings are under the direction of the church, so far as it is according to the rules and usages of the denomination that they should be. The church, therefore (that is, the spiritual body), usually has the initiative in the choice of a pastor, while the congregation or society (acting, it may be, through the trustees) unite; and the salary must be voted by the society at large and ratified by the trustees. If in any denomination the rules and usages require the pastor to be designated by an ecclesiastical authority, the society or trustees have yet to fix the salary. This, of course, may amount to a veto. If in any church the rules and usages require absolutely no ecclesiastical connection or sanction, then the whole power respecting pastor rests with the trustees. In a strictly independent church, the pastor may practically be chosen at pleasure by the trustees, irrespective of the wishes of communicants.

The church usually has its own executive committee, called a session or other such name, who are communicants of age and experience, and are the counselors and aids of the pastor. The church may take up its own contributions for spiritual purposes, and apply them according to its own rules and usages, without regard to the trustees. Contributions for missionary purposes, and for the relief of the poor and sick, are not contributions for the support of the society, and the church may have its own treasurer for such funds independent of the trustees, or may collect and administer them through the instrumentality of the trustees, if the trustees are willing to undertake the task.

Third. What has been said of the organization shows the importance of a definite membership to the peace and security of either body. The worst time to determine whether a person is a member is when he claims a right to vote or act as such. If his claim be challenged it must be determined, but it will generally be found that if the rules of the body had been clearly expressed, and a proper record of membership kept, there would be no room for controversy, and the personal bitterness which such a controversy provokes would have been avoided.

There are other reasons resulting from the law of trusts which sometimes make the existence of a definite and positively ascertainable membership important to the right of a voluntary association, such as a "church" under this dual organization, to enforce a special trust made for its benefit.

The first duty of those who organize a church is to make it clear beyond mistake who are entitled to vote, and this is to be done by careful attention to the statute, where the law declares the right, and, if it does not, by framing proper by-laws or constitutional rules settling in advance whether those under age and of either sex may vote. Nor is this condition of peace and unity secure by the existence of a rule. Constant attention must be paid to maintaining an accurate record of existing membership—not that any record can be deemed to be infallible, and exclude all not actually on it, but the maintenance of such a record reduces the number of questionable voters to a minimum, and often preserves harmony where the neglect of it would invite dissension.

Fourth. Under the statute we have been considering, the qualifications of a voter (after the first or incorporating election) are:

1. Full age.

2. Having been a stated attendant on divine worship in the church at least for a year preceding the election (or in some States six months).

3. Having contributed to the support of the society according to its usages and customs.

The right to vote extends to women as well as men, under the New-York statute, if they possess these qualifications.*

It will at once strike the reader that there is here no religious test. It is not necessary that the voter be a communicant.* Nor is it enough that he be a communicant. The statute qualifications are alone to be considered, and the trustees cannot alter them.

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*It has not, however, been extended to women in the Episcopal or Reformed Dutch congregations.

"A stated attendant" means a usual or habitual but not necessarily a uniform attendant. If a contested election should turn on the question whether a particular person voting or excluded from voting had been such an attendant for the year, the law would determine it by the reasonable meaning and application of the phrase, in contradistinction to occasional attendance. The stated preaching of the gospel exists where the services are regularly held (emergencies excepted) in virtue of one continuous engagement or obligation, and services faithfully held under such appointment once in two weeks or once in four weeks might be more truly said to be stated services than services much more frequent but dependent on casual circumstances and special purposes. So the phrase "stated attendant" is used to import something in the nature of a continued tie of acknowledged duty or principle identifying the person with the services, rather than an absolute invariable presence.

Contribution to the support of "the church society or congregation" has reference to contribution to the temporalities in charge of the trustees, by which the expenses of the services are met. Giving to the contributions taken for missionary purposes does not qualify to vote for trustees. On the other hand, personal services may be given by an attendant, and accepted by the trustees as a contribution to the support of the society, if they are such as are usually paid for.

The contribution must be "according to the usages and customs" of the society. If the expenses are paid in whole or in part from weekly offerings, contributions in that manner are enough. If from pew-rents, the payment of pew-rent to the trustees is enough. But neither the trustees nor the society can prescribe a test of contribution independent of the usages of the body. One society adopted at its organization a standing rule that payment of pew-rent should be the only mode of contribution for the purpose of entitling to vote. Years afterward the trustees, needing more money, tried the plan of circulating collection-plates at every service; and it became for several years the usage of the society to raise part of its expenses in this way. At an election during this usage the trustees cited the old rule and sought to exclude from voting those stated attendants of a year's standing and full age who had habitually contributed in the plates but had not rented pews. But these voters could not be excluded, because they had contributed according to the usage, and therefore were protected by the statute. In one controversy on which the writer had to advise, the trustees passed a resolution that no one should be deemed to have contributed who had not paid at least ten dollars; but under an order of the court they refrained from enforcing the resolution.

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* There are recent statutes under which Baptist and Congregational churches may organize in a way to give the right to vote to communicants only, and there is a local exception in the Methodist churches in Brooklyn; but most of the churches of these denominations live under the general law I am stating in the text.

Payment to a pewholder by one to whom the pewholder sublets a part of his pew cannot justly be considered contribution to the support of the society. The subtenant, if he wishes to be entitled to vote by reason of paying rent, should agree to pay a part of the rent, and pay it to the trustees or their collector.

In a very warmly contested case the trustees, whose zeal in controversy spoiled their judgment, quietly arranged with members of the party in the congregation that were favorable to the trustees' side of the contest that each pewholder among them, instead of paying an entire rent on a single pew, as the members of the other party usually did, should cause a separate rent to be paid for each seat in the name of each of the respective members of his family, so that when the time for counting strength in votes came the trustees claimed about four or five votes to a pew on their side of the question, and allowed only one vote to a pew for most of those opposed to them. The exposure of the device sufficed to deprive it of success.

The statute directs the clerk to the trustees to "keep a register of the names of all such persons as shall desire to become stated hearers in the said church, congregation or society, and shall therein note the time when such request was made," and adds, "the said clerk shall attend all such subsequent elections [after the first] in order to test the qualifications of such electors, in case the same should be questioned."

This list, however, is not conclusive. Obviously, a person who had his name put upon it at or before the beginning of the year might fail to attend or contribute; and on the other hand, a failure to get on the list, or the omission to keep such a list, could not take away the right of one qualified by the statute to vote.

IV

ADMINISTRATION

I. CONTROLLING THE USE OF THE BUILDING

IT follows from what has been previously said that the building exists for the use and benefit of the church. It is for this sacred purpose that it has been procured, and it is to serve this purpose that the title is vested in the corporation or the trustees who are charged with its control. It may be proper that the edifice should be used in every way that is wholly promotive of religion in the broadest sense; and the propriety of its use in any particular case should, doubtless, be determined in view of the rules and usages of the denomination, the condition of the community, and the nature of the proposed use.

But the question, Who is to determine this propriety? is a distinct question.

Under the dual organization already described, the legal title is in the trustees. The "church" itself has the right to the use of the edifice; but even their use is subject to the reasonable and necessary limitations of what I may call the "housekeeping arrangements" of the trustees. Thus the "church" or their representative body have the right to decide on the times of worship, but the trustees have the right to close the house for repairs. The pastor or officers of the church (except in those organizations where the powers of the church are expressly vested in him or them) have no right to let the edifice or give its use to any special purpose however laudable. For the pastor to announce a special lecture or concert in the church without assent of the trustees is like appointing a meeting in a member's parlor without notice to him. If ever justifiable, it is on the faith of the existence of that good nature which may even sanction a surprise party. For any special service, even of the church itself at an unusual time, the concurrence of the trustees or their representative officer should be sought, because the safe keeping of the building and its furniture and the arrangements for cleaning, heating, and lighting are all in their hands, and made at their expense; and while they have no right to close the edifice against the church, except when repairs and renovations require it, they have a duty in reference to its use and care that requires that they should be consulted in reference to time of unusual services. They must not, however, unnecessarily refuse to allow the church to meet in its own edifice.

On the other hand, the trustees have no right to use the edifice for other purposes without the assent of the church. It is sacred to religious uses and the business necessarily attendant on those uses. The trustees may well assume the acquiescence of the church in occasional uses for religious services in harmony with its order, faith, and discipline; but other occasional use, or any regular use whatever beside that of the church, approaches toward a breach of trust in proportion as it disregards the restrictions which the usages of the denomination impose on the uses of their church edifices. Lectures and concerts of a kind that are sanctioned in church edifices by the usages of the denomination, the trustees may properly allow with the express or tacit assent of the church. But if they assume to act on tacit assent and on individual objects, they ought to be very prompt to ask express assent of the church or its committee before turning the property to any use, however good, other than that of the church for whose use it was acquired.

II. THE MUSIC

It will be seen from what has been said that the musical arrangements are upon the line. The service of the choir is part of the worship, and the church are clearly entitled to have it conducted in consonance with the usages of the denomination. The trustees cannot put in an organ against the wish of the church. But if an organ is put in, since the salaries are part of the temporalities, the trustees may claim a right to control the expenditure. There need be no practical difficulty in either method, if it be distinctly understood which body is charged with the power and duty. In one of the best-organized churches within my knowledge, it was agreed formally at the outset, by vote of both bodies, that the church should always have direction of the musical as well as the other parts of the service, and that the trustees should pay the reasonable expenses thereof.

Probably the experience of most readers will confirm the opinion that the musical arrangements, subject to the veto of the trustees as to cost, ought to be in charge of a committee in closest sympathy with the pastor and the direction of the worship. Trustees, when charged with providing the music, are sometimes tempted to consider it as a means of attracting pewholders and contributors, in the laudable desire to enhance the income of the society, instead of considering simply its function as a part of the worship.

III. IMPORTANCE OF REGULARITY

I OUGHT not to take space here to insist on the absolute duty of scrupulously fair and honorable dealing in church affairs. Every pastor should not only instruct but inspire his people with this principle. But it is probably needful to say something of the importance of regularity in parish business. By regularity I mean careful conformity to rule. If the statute requires fifteen days' notice of a meeting, it is folly to say, "Well, one week will do for us." If it requires the pastor's salary to be confirmed by a writing signed and sealed by the trustees, it is very unjust to the pastor to neglect to make and deliver to him such a certificate. If it requires that two elders or church-wardens, or if there be no such officers, then two of the members nominated by a majority of the members present, shall preside at elections, it is not wise for two of the trustees to volunteer to act instead; and if they do, still more foolish for them to feel hurt if some more cautious brother objects that it is irregular. Even though the regulation be a foolish one, compliance is generally wise. An irregularity may be no harm in itself, but yet afford just the place into which a mischief-maker may introduce harm.

There is no crack so slight but some brother with a crotchety conscience may think it his duty to put in a wedge. The majority of church quarrels within my knowledge have been introduced by some afterthought, taking advantage of a technical irregularity.

The short notice of meeting, or the informal agreement on salary, or the neglect to record a resolution, may do no harm, unless an occasion arises when some brother thinks it his duty to oppose what has been done. If it had been done regularly, he would have no ground to stand upon. The irregularity lets him in to compel a division of the church on his favorite controversy, whatever it is.

I do not suppose that any general suggestions on this point would be useful here beyond saying that every pastor and board of trustees, and church committee or session, ought to enlist the attention and service in office of one or more men of good sense and experience in affairs, who have given or will give the necessary attention to the law of the State in which they are, to enable the body to take every step with regularity. It does not necessarily require a lawyer, and if he is a lawyer he should above all be a Christian lawyer, to whom the cause of Christ and the principles which Christ taught are paramount to every other consideration; but it does require a conscientious attention to details, and a moderate and judicious spirit.

IV. ELECTIONS, RULES OF BUSINESS, AND RECORDS

First. Akin to the importance of a known and public record of membership is that of formal elections, regularly recurring and distinctly understood, and regular records of election. These should never be neglected. Officers should never be left to hold over for want of an election, nor reëlected informally without a record of the act. Laxity in this respect has often gone unnoticed until, when some question divided the society which would never have sustained a controversy by itself, the appearance of two sets of officers espousing opposite sides has suddenly disclosed the fatal neglect; and here again the personal element thus introduced makes a new dissension far worse than the first question.

In some religious corporations the elections for trustees are held at an annual meeting, at which reports of the transactions of the year are made by the board; the treasurer's account is presented and audited, or presented after having been previously audited by direction of the trustees; the question of the pastor's salary voted on, if any change or renewal is to be made; and any matters concerning the general interests of the society are discussed. In other churches the election is held by "opening the polls," between specified hours on the day fixed, without any organized meeting. The New-York statute allows either method. In those churches where there are abundant means and the finances are cared for easily, the latter method is perhaps more common. In those where it is desired to enlist the active coöperation of as many as may be, or where the trustees desire to act as far as possible under instructions or advice from the congregation, the former method is more common. But it should not be forgotten in society meetings that to a great extent the legal power as well as the responsibility remains with the trustees, and that on most subjects the meeting should request, not instruct. It is not inconsistent with this to add that the trustees should in most things seek to know and carry out the wishes of the society, the best expression of which is had by the regular maintenance of such meetings and the calling of special meetings whenever special emergencies arise.

The question whether a nominating committee shall be appointed, or nominations at large be received, is constantly up. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages.

Where the policy of enlisting as general coöperation as possible in the work of the church, and judiciously consulting the average or general preference is the policy which animates the conduct of affairs, a very good method is to take an advisory ballot, either with or without previous open nominations, and, without making the result of the ballot public, refer it to a judicious nominating committee. This gives the committee fairly accurate knowledge of the general feeling or wish, and enables such nominations to be made as shall both respect that wish and strengthen the organization for its work.

Second. The question is often asked whether parliamentary law ought to prevail in the business meetings of a religious body. Probably those best qualified to judge would agree that it ought to be insisted on so far as necessary to secure that "all things be done decently and in order," and no further. The true distinction may be suggested by saying that the *principles* of parliamentary law ought never to be forgotten, and the *rules* of parliamentary law never to be mentioned unless clearly necessary.

The principles of deliberative order that appear to be most important to these organizations are that:

1. He who speaks should not address any individual but the chairman, and should not be interrupted by others, except by necessity and in the most courteous manner.

2. Discussion should not be carried on without a definite proposal before the meeting, and remarks should be confined to that proposal or modifications of it.

3. In discussing a definite proposal, opportunity should be afforded to all; and if limit becomes necessary, it is fairer to fix the one limit of time for all speakers than to cut off discussion by an arbitrary time or by the previous question.

Third. Every corporate act of the membership at large should appear in its own record-book. The record-book of the board of trustees should be a separate volume, or, if for convenience the same volume is used, the records should be distinct from each other, and the minutes of a meeting of the society at large and those of a meeting of the board of officers should never be confused with each other nor be capable of being mistaken for each other. In more than one case the whole property of a church has been imperiled by careless disregard of the distinction.

V

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL

I. CONTRACTS, FUNDS, AND SPECIAL TRUSTS

FIRST. The contracts which the trustees make they should remember they make as trustees, and it is a part of the trust reposed in them that they make them legally and effectively.

If the law, as in New-York, requires the salary to be fixed by the society, and ratified by the trustees under seal, they ought to see to it that the proceedings to fix the salary are regular, and that the proper instrument of ratification is made and delivered to the pastor as his evidence of the contract. In private business a man may often omit to volunteer such a formality unless or until the other party to the arrangement asks for it; but in church business, to assume the moral obligation of payment which will bind the consciences of all or nearly all, and neglect the legal formality which belongs to that obligation, is only to leave open the way for some future objector who is not controlled by the moral obligation to endeavor to stop the trustees from paying an obligation that is not legal. In a secular corporation such a loophole is often thought profitable. In a church corporation its immorality is seen, and it can never have the poor excuse of being profitable. The same principle ought to lead to clothing every transaction of the parish affairs in regularity which cannot be successfully questioned.

Second. Every prospering church has a gradually accumulating permanent property. It begins with a church lot and edifice; when that is free from debt, perhaps a parsonage is added, perhaps a mission school-house, then a parish-house, and so on. The property may be small, but it is growing. What it may become doth not yet appear. If the foundation of the trust on which it is held is secure, its permanent usefulness is secure. If the trust is *known* to be secure, and the members of the society and its officers, instead of speaking lightly of proper precaution and formality, take a pride in its security and the precautions that confirm it, the very existence of the fund becomes an invitation to aid its increase.

There is no reason why the foundation of special funds in trust in connection with our churches should not largely increase, thus securing useful provisions for some purposes that otherwise are neglected.

II. DEBT

If the officers of religious corporations depending on voluntary contributions realized how much easier it is to raise the money for a desired object before the desire has been gratified than after, there would be fewer debts. If they did not conceal indebtedness debts would be smaller.

The first step toward canceling a debt is to face its existence. If it cannot be extinguished at once, the next step is to put it at once in the way of gradual extinction. The discouragement of a debt is not in its existence, but in its increase. Debt is only the under-side of credit, and the disposition of enterprising Americans to take advantage of the assistance of credit is too strong to justify the hope that churches will soon be brought into existence without debt. But if a debt is diminishing, or can be put in the way of diminishing, its existence is no reason for discouragement. Hence, if there is a chronic debt, it is indispensable either to reduce it at once, or make a budget for the year that will reduce it even a little within the year. When the current is once flowing in the right direction, and things are getting better instead of worse, even if it is only a very little better, relief is only a question of time; and the encouragement that comes with progress in reduction will, sooner or later, bring the time when immediate and complete relief will be feasible.

Trustees, in dealing with finances, sometimes forget the power there is in the paramount object of the church, and object to the church attempting to give money for the promotion of religion until it has paid its own debts and expenses. But a large part of those in any prosperous church who give to its debts and expenses do so because the church is doing something for missionary and other religious causes. That is why they are in that church. To suspend outside benevolence until a debt is paid, or while expenses are equal to income, is to turn away the chief element of strength. No thinking Christian desires to continue long a member of a church which requires all he can give to religion to be spent upon itself. That which draws Christians to the church is the success of the church in its true work, and the vigorous maintenance of that work is the surest way to enlist the devotion, self-denial, and persistence needed to carry the church through its own financial necessities.

III. LEGAL ADVICE AND SERVICES

If a church enjoys the wisdom of good sense and conscientious business ability, and its men of business and professional men will attend its business meetings and look after its affairs, the occasions on which it will need legal services will be rare, and even the occasions when its officers will need even legal advice will not be frequent.

When legal advice or service is needed, it should be sought directly and paid for, so that it shall be given under the sanction of professional responsibility; for a church should not expect to get its title secured, any more than its roof shingled, for nothing, unless indeed it is so fortunate as to have friends that will do either as thoroughly and well for love as for money. On the other hand, such a spirit ought to prevail that neither a legal adviser nor any other member of the church should expect to make money out of its service.

Among other occasions when professional advice is usually necessary is the drawing of a subscription paper for preliminary funds before organization, for the object of the trust may depend on this, and such advice is particularly important if the committee propose to buy land with contributions before incorporating. Under the New-York statute, private parties may act in this way, and, if the papers are properly drawn, will hold the property under a legal duty to surrender it to the corporation when formed. Another occasion is the effecting a legal incorporation; another, the purchase or sale of real property. The purchase of property for a mission school, and the understanding as to whether the title is to be held by the society or a new organization is equally important. On many of these occasions such services as are necessary will most likely be cheerfully given gratuitously in aid of the enterprise, if the church is ready to pay for them; for this readiness gives at once a pecuniary value to the services and to the gift of them. But to attempt to get such services by indirection, by asking begging questions, is very poor economy.

IV. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

In many churches there is a good deal of mystery on this subject. One would think from the secrecy — or, rather, I should say, the silence — which envelops church finances that there was some fear that if the congregation knew how the money was spent they might be less inclined to give. The most prosperous churches I know, large and small (except those endowed churches so rare in this country), are those in which the frank policy prevails of making known the items and taking care to make them effectually known. More than one church within my knowledge has found that a decided increase in its income followed the publicity of its expenses. One of the best-managed churches I have seen publishes each year in a manual, distributed through all the pews, the account rendered for the year by the treasurer of the board of trustees showing how much was paid for pastor's salary, how much to the sexton, how much for each item of church expenses, from the coal in the cellar up to the organ-blower in the loft; and the only ruffle about expenses it has had for a long time was when some well-meaning members undertook to raise a private purse to supplement the appropriation for music under a pledge that nobody outside the committee should know how much was raised and spent in this way.

Ingenuity in making the financial condition known, even if that condition be a debt, is sometimes well rewarded. In one church where there had been a large purchase of property on credit, assuming thereby a debt which many would have tried to keep as shady as possible, the rector hung up in the vestibule a diagram of the property, marked with as many squares as there were dollars in the debt, and as fast as contributions came in from week to week he marked off a corresponding number of squares. The effect was magical.

In fact, with comparatively few exceptions, the members of a congregation are desirous to forward its work and supply its needs. If kept in ignorance of its financial condition, their disposition will still lead them to contribute something; so that if a church is too rich to need anything, the policy of mystery may secure contributions. But if it is in need, systematically making known its needs is the best policy, unless on the other hand it is bankrupt, so that a knowledge of its condition would lead people to abandon it as hopeless. Even then publicity, though painful, is wholesome in a religious enterprise.

One of the chief advantages of publicity is in the obstacle it interposes to the insidious process of growing a debt. There are many churches settling down to this profitless work and nobody knows anything about it. Even the trustees can hardly be said to know it. If the treasury had a surplus they would know it, but as it is overdrawn, they are all thinking about something else, except the treasurer, and he does n't like to complain, hoping that the end of the year will come out right. Meanwhile bills go unpaid, interest accumulates, the building begins to wear an air of dilapidation and faded credit, a tone of languor and uncertainty marks the enterprise, members of the congregation are disheartened and lose their attachment without knowing why, and all because a secret debt is growing. In most cases if it was not a secret it would not grow; that is to say, if the church deserved to live. But a church that is working up a debt cannot do much other work, while a church that is working down a debt, even though it be slowly and with a painful effort, is in the path of usefulness and on the way to freedom.

A change from the policy of silence to that of publicity cannot always be made at once. The reader who may approve the views I have expressed and desire to see them adopted in his church may find great opposition. It may take time to introduce the change. It may not be feasible to carry it all at once. But the principle of making known definitely the receipts and items of expenditure and taking pains to call general attention to them, in whatever department this policy may be commenced, whether in society or corporation, or in the Sunday-school work, or in the missionary contributions, or in a building enterprise, or in buying a lot, will, I believe, demonstrate its own usefulness in encouraging contributions to every purpose that is well managed, and will in time lead to a wholesome publicity of all expenditures, except the details of those charitable personal succors which one hand should not know the other is doing.

V. RULES OF ORDER

The following rules of order are suggested for business meetings. They may well be incorporated into the manual of the church:

Officers.—At the appointed time for the meeting, the pastor, when present, shall act as moderator. In case of his absence the clerk, or if the clerk is absent, any member, may call the church to order, and put the question upon the choice of a moderator.

When the moderator chosen has taken the chair, if the clerk is absent, a clerk *pro tem.* should be chosen.

Speaking.—When a member desires to be heard, he should rise in his place and address himself to the presiding officer by his title, moderator, and should then pause for a moment until the moderator announces his name, or otherwise designates him.

Motions.—Every motion must be made in writing, if required by any member; and, when seconded, must be read or clearly stated by the moderator, and submitted to the consideration of the church. A motion made and seconded must be disposed of before any other business is in order; and meanwhile all other motions are out of order, except such as dispose of a principal question, as a motion to amend or commit, or for the previous question; and such as arise out of or are incidental to the principal motion, as questions relating to order, motions for leave to withdraw a motion, etc.; and motions incidental to business, as motions to adjourn, etc.

An Amendment may go to the exclusion, addition, or substitution of words or sentences; indeed, a motion to amend by striking out all the words after the word *resolved*, and substituting an entirely new proposition upon the same subject, is in order. But where a resolution is in sections, the amendments must be in the order of the sections, beginning with the first section; and therefore, if an amendment is made to the third section of a resolution first, and carried, it will be out of order to move an amendment to the first or second section, No subject different from that under consideration can be admitted under color of an amendment.

DIVIDING RESOLUTIONS.—Where a proposition is complicated, the presiding officer may divide the same, at the request of a member.

WITHDRAWING MOTION.—Until a motion has been stated to the meeting by the presiding officer, the mover may withdraw or modify it, at his pleasure.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS.—There are certain motions which may be made at *any time* that the mover can gain the floor; such are the motions to refer to a committee, to lay on the table, to postpone to a future time, fixed or indefinite, and to adjourn. All these motions may be debated except the motion to postpone indefinitely and to adjourn. Motions to postpone or to commit cannot be made a second time at the same meeting. And when a member is speaking, no motion can be made but with his consent.

DEBATE.—When any motion is before the church, every member has a right to express his views concerning it. The moderator is bound to confine every speaker to the point under consideration, and also to protect him against all interruption, except that of being called to order if he violate the rule of courtesy or of debate; but after the matter of order is adjusted, the speaker has the right to go on with the debate.

ORDER OF VOTING.—When several amendments or propositions are before the meeting, the order in which they are to be acted upon is usually the *reverse* of the order in which they were made. If several *sums* are proposed, the *largest* is to be first put to vote; if several *periods of time*, the *longest;* and as to numbers generally the *largest*. When a motion is put, it should be first clearly stated by the moderator or read by the clerk.

Effect of Various Motions.— An indefinite postponement defeats or suppresses the question under debate. A motion to refer to a committee postpones the subject until the committee report. A motion to lay on the table means to lay aside for the present.

The Previous Question is a motion that the main question under discussion be immediately acted upon. If the motion for the previous question is carried in the affirmative, the question under discussion must be put without change of form or further debate. If the motion for the previous question is lost, then the consideration of the main question under discussion is still in order. The previous question cannot be put upon an amendment, or upon any of the other merely subsidiary motions, which are used, like the previous question itself, for the suppression of original motions.

Voting.—There are three ways of declaring the sense of the meeting: 1. By the moderator stating the substance of the proposition, and declaring it to be adopted, if no one objects; in this case, if no one should object, the proposition is adopted by common consent. 2. By the moderator putting the question, and the members in favor of it responding aye, and afterward those opposed responding nay; and thereupon the moderator declares the result; but if a member thinks the moderator in error, or that an accurate count would show a different result, he has a right to demand it immediately, in which case the question must be put again, and the voters carefully counted. 3. By ballot.

After the question is put to vote there can be no debate, and no new proposition made, until the voting is finished.

Reconsiderations.— After the vote is taken, any member who voted in the *majority* may during the same meeting move a reconsideration, which motion opens the subject again for debate; and if the vote to reconsider is adopted, the whole matter stands just as it did before the reconsidered vote was taken.

Committees.— It is the duty of the moderator to appoint committees, unless the meeting do so by its own action. The mover of a resolution, by virtue of which a committee is to be appointed, is entitled, by courtesy, to be appointed chairman of such committee. The person first named in the enumeration of the persons appointed on a committee is to be deemed chairman of such committee; but the committee itself may elect another chairman.

Reports of Committees.— When the report of a committee is presented, motions should be made either to accept, or to accept and adopt, or to amend, or to recommit the report. Upon a motion to accept the report, it will be placed on file; upon a motion to accept and adopt the report, it will become the action of the meeting.

Appeals.— All the decisions of the presiding officer are subject to revision by the church.

Adjourned Meetings are deemed a continuance of the original meeting.

VI

PARISH WAYS AND MEANS

THERE is an impression among both outsiders and insiders that the church with all its affiliated benevolent institutions is a very expensive affair; that the amount raised for these objects is enormous. Let us look a little into this matter.

Among the nations England ranks first in point of beneficence. But we find that the yearly duty on imported tobacco alone paid to the British Government is thirteen times as much as that collected for the conversion of the world, and the outgoes from consumers of inebriating liquors eight hundred millions, or one hundred times as much.

In our own country, the American Board probably receives a larger support from Congregational churches than any other society sustained by them; yet, were each member to pay half a cent daily, the amount would be more than double the largest sum it has ever received by contributions in any one year. What is annually expended for tobacco by church members would amply endow ten American Boards; and the annual cost to consumers of intoxicating drinks — seven hundred millions of dollars — would cover the expenses of fifteen hundred such societies.

Compare the cost of our churches and places of public worship with what it was under the Jewish Theocracy. In Massachusetts, for example, we have, of all the different denominations, about one minister to nine hundred persons, while in Palestine, covering about the same area of territory, there was a priest to eighty-six. These priests all received their support from the people, and when to this is added the building of the temple and the various synagogues throughout Judea, with the numerous sacrifices, we get some idea of the vast expense incurred.

To meet this, there was, first, the extensive system of offerings. At the birth of a child, at the ingathering of the harvest, on recovery from sickness, or on the commission of some sin, every Jew laid his gift or his sacrifice upon the altar. In addition to this, a tenth of each man's income was required, making the whole amount about one-fifth. No excuse was accepted, no plea was available. Whatever the circumstances the tithe was demanded, and false returns were out of the question. Offerings and tithes were part and parcel of the religious system.

In the primitive church the same view prevailed, nor is any other recognized in Scripture. Throughout Paul's epistles, the giving for church purposes is treated as an act of worship, the Sabbath being the time appointed for the weekly offerings. The Bible affords no warrant for our modern practice of distinguishing religious acts as sacred and secular. Why, indeed, is not the dollar rightly given as holy as the prayer rightly offered? The former, which lays the ax at the root of human selfishness, is surely no less precious to God than the latter, which, it may be, requires little or no sacrifice. We talk a great deal about the temporalities of the church. God forgive us for a lapse in piety that allows such an expression to have any significance! Let us interlink our tithes and our devotions as did the angel when he said to Cornelius: "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

An error which springs out of the misapprehension I am considering is the regarding what is appropriate to the support of public worship as a charity. Says one:

"There are not a few in the community who regard every dollar spent for public worship as given in pure benevolence. What a monstrous error this is! The church of Christ in any sense a charity? Never, thank God. Jesus commands men to set about the work; he does not solicit subscriptions.

"The church a charity? It is not even a luxury, but a prime necessity in every community where it is either pleasant or safe to live. Must a city have pavements and side-walks and streets, lamps and water-works and parks and horse-railroads and libraries and museums? It can do without the whole of them better than it can do without a church. Must it have its court-houses and jails and police officers, and bolts and locks on the doors and fastenings to the windows, and impenetrable vaults in the banks? It would be safer without all of them than without a church. Let the church of Christ in any community exercise its full power, and your court-houses would be closed, except for the trial of civil cases arising out of misunderstandings and not from malice; your jails might be swept away, and your policeman would be a needless official. Even with its hands tied and shorn of its strength as the church stands to-day, it exerts an influence for morality and social order which is in advance of all others combined.

"Did you ever live for days and weeks in a community on which no such influence was brought to bear? — where men choose the open country, away from tree and bush, for fear of being shot down for the few shillings in their pocket; where after dark they dare not venture into the streets of the town lest they should never return; where night by night they load gun and pistol; where vice of every sort walks abroad in shameless exposure; where might makes right, and nameless squalor looks sadly up into the pitiless eyes of the tyranny that rides over it rough-shod?

"The church a charity! Let men who hold to this go and unlearn their folly in lands where the church is not; or, better and fairer demonstration, let them watch the setting up of the Church of Christ in the midst of some mass of brutalized humanity, and watch the gracious transformations it effects from barbarism to civilization, from violence and vice to purity and good order and security. We have our tragedies, it is true, under our Christian civilization, but they are the exceptions, not the common law. Putting all questions of religious culture aside, the church is a financial and social necessity. Tear down the sanctuaries of the city and suspend public worship, and what would follow? On the ruins of the churches would rise the grog-shop and the brothel. All classes of business, except those that minister to vicious indulgence, would languish. Men would fortify their houses like castles. Real estate would depreciate. Insurance companies would decline risks in such a godless community, not from piety but from policy. Unthrift would flourish, life be insecure, wealth a hazardous possession.

"The church supported by charity! Then the taxes we pay to support the government are given in charity, and our whole array of civil and legislative and judicial officers are pauper institutions supported by the benevolence of the generous people.

"The churches a charity! No, my friend: The money you spend for public worship is just as really spent upon yourself as though you put it into a garment to cover you, or a roof to shelter you. It all goes to establish the good, safe order of society on which we all depend for prosperity, security, and happiness. It is given to our business as really as if deposited in the bank, and no man who looks the facts squarely in the face dares assert to the contrary."

But look at public worship as an educational power. With its grand text-book, its thoroughly drilled instructors, its Sunday-school teachings, its music and its prayers, who can compute its influence on the intellectual development of the people? It is the highest part of man's nature which it educates, a part inadequately reached by all other agencies. If, then, the money appropriated for the support of public worship is a charity, much more is that spent in the support of our schools and colleges a charity. Nothing in this department of human culture yields such large returns.

It is estimated that the expenses of Congregational churches in New England are larger than those of any other denomination. The average expense of these churches, not including what might be considered the interest on the first cost of the church building, is twelve hundred dollars, the average salary of the minister being not far from eight hundred dollars. This leaves four hundred for all other claims — not more than some janitors receive for the care of two or three school-houses. The current expenses of a flourishing church in one of our smaller cities, exclusive of the interest on the church building, is four thousand five hundred dollars, while the cost of carrying on a first-class drug store is twelve thousand dollars, not reckoning the supervision of the firm. The cost of a single locomotive would pay the expenses of the above church for four years. The average rental of the pews is thirty dollars a year, or six dollars a seat — less than twelve cents a Sunday. Is not the church a cheap institution? Where can men get so much for so small a sum?

If it were only felt that a well-filled treasury is as indispensable to the true prosperity of the church as purity of doctrine; that money is as important as prayer; and if what men consecrate to the cause were more nearly proportioned to what they expend for their own pleasure, wherever else there might be a falling off, there certainly would be none here. A church debt would be out of the question. Instead of scrimping here and there and everywhere, we should find broad views and generous expenditures.

Among the plans for meeting church expenses, the following has been named as successful: "Each member of the church presents the trustees with a statement of the cash value of his property, after deducting all debts. After obtaining subscriptions from all others not belonging to the church, who yet are willing to assist in maintaining it, the trustees assess the balance of the expenses for the year upon the church members, according to the valuation reported by each. On this plan there can be no deficiency. In its working it is found that some, whose taxes would be very small, voluntarily pledge themselves to give larger sums."

Another mode warmly advocated is that by free seats, each person paying according to his own convictions of duty. The church doors are thus thrown wide open, and all the pews are free, though according to the usual workings of the system each family falls into a regular sitting-place as much as in the taxing system, the difference being that every man is his own assessor. Several statements from different sources will show something of the feeling as to this system.

> "I am more and more growing into the conviction that our present mode of pew-renting in the churches should be abolished. This thing of purchasing seats in the house of God as in a theater, and taking possession of them to the exclusion of the outside unbelieving world, does not appear to me to be right."
>
> "As a workingman, I would say that the feeling is painfully prevalent among us that our churches *are* generally 'close corporations.' And I know that the free church will attract many who now never attend, many of whom scoff at Christian hypocrisy and cant. When we as Christ's disciples are willing to deny ourselves, as he taught, we shall not find it hard to sacrifice our own seats if thereby some may be saved."

"The exclusive system of pew-renting has been tried sufficiently to prove that it fails to reach the masses. The free system, which respects no man's person, is being tried with increasing success. Some of our best and oldest pastors confess with grief that their life-work has been circumscribed and impaired by this 'unscriptural system,' and that if they were to begin their work again, they would never preach in a house with rented pews. Even when all our pews are rented we have our churches but half full. We may cry aloud and ring our bells till the judgment day, but we can never call the masses into rented pews to hear the Gospel. Those who *need* it most *want* it least, and they are kept from hearing it by the most trivial causes. All hindrances, so far as possible, should be removed, and of these pew-renting is among the chief."

"You are not ready to become free until you have secured the intelligent adoption of the general plan by the pastor and parish. Quietly introduce the idea, then wait. Let it have time to turn itself over in the most cautious, the slowest and dullest minds, until it has been viewed in every light. You may be assured of a favorable vote to-day. Don't press a vote. A few years ago the pastor of a thrifty church in this commonwealth preached a sermon in favor of free sittings. The idea was new. It took. The annual meeting was held soon afterward. A motion was then made that the seats in the meeting-house be made free. It was easily carried. Some thought the arrangement an economical one, and thus favored it. Some expected to see the irreligious crowd in on the Sabbath and fill the house. Some had not considered sufficiently that they could no longer retain their old seats, where their fine carpeting and soft hassocks were the handsome badges of proprietorship. Dissatisfaction soon appeared. It increased. At the close of a year the plan was given up."

"I really believe that the great cause of much ministerial suffering is due, not so much to the want of right feeling in church members, as to the want of system in regard to church revenues; and that the only remedy is a weekly offering as a part of public worship, having the pews all free — no merchandise being sold or let in the house of God."

"What is in the future we cannot tell. But when our most wealthy people give up the best pews in the house, which they have held for years, and then pledge more than they have ever paid before, and take their risk to get a seat with the rest, for the sake of having the gospel preached to the masses, it is a very strong argument that the gospel of Jesus Christ has done them good. It cannot fail to have a good influence, and with God's blessing may bring some erring ones into the fold of Christ, which will amply pay for the sacrifice made."

"The pledge and collection system, which prevails in the most successful free churches, does not materially impair their freedom. It simply modifies it. The plan adopted should be as simple as possible, but a plan we must have. A good working plan involves these elements, viz.: yearly pledges, weekly offerings, and box collections. This, at least, is the judgment of the writer."

"In our church we have unanimity, consecration, system. They give us success. Without them we could not sustain the freedom of our enterprise for six months."

From a thriving Western town, a pastor writes:

"Previous to my coming here the pews had been sold at auction the first of January. Some took pews who never paid for them. The number defraying the expenses of the church was about sixty. Every year there was a deficiency which somebody had to make up. In order to raise the amount, imaginary values had to be put upon certain pews actually worth no more than others, but *supposed* to be for the purpose of permitting those able and willing to pay high prices. Other pews, for a similar reason, were put at a very low price. The result was natural. Here we had the rich man's aisle; there, the poor man's corner. Class distinctions were thus created in the house of God, just the last place where such things should be tolerated.

"In January (1873) we adopted the free-church system, asking for pledges from men, women, and children. We now have, instead of sixty, two hundred and ten regular contributors. Think of the moral influence on the children who, every Sunday, give their dimes or nickels for the support of public worship.

"In all the history of this church — forty years — it never knew a year in which there was not a financial deficiency. At the close of the first quarter of our experiment, we had a surplus of thirty dollars over all expenses. Our collection has gradually increased every month, and though our expenses are a thousand dollars more than formerly, instead of a deficiency we shall have a surplus."

The following paragraph gives confirmatory evidence from other churches:

"The present condition of the seven parishes in Hartford, Conn., which are connected with the Episcopal church in that place, is a singular illustration of the changes which may be wrought in a decade in parochial management. Ten years ago, Christ Church, the mother parish, was moribund with old fogyism, and spent almost as much money in Sunday opera music as it contributed to the rector's salary. It was no place for a poor man unless he was a recipient of charity. St. John's was respectable, if not aristocratic, and had ideas of usefulness not much better than those of Christ Church. The Church of the Incarnation was a struggling mission paying a pittance to a wealthy rector. Trinity Church was trying to rise to an ideal position. The Church of the Good Shepherd, under the patronage of Mr. Colt, had free sittings. St. Thomas's Church, in the northern part of the city, had built beyond its means, and was temporarily bankrupt. One after another the newer churches adopted the free-seat system, with a pledge or voluntary offering as its means of support, and finally Christ Church, the spiritual parent of them all, forsook the pew system and the abominations which frequently go with it, and has found that under the system of free sittings and volunteer offerings, the expenses of the parish are more readily met, the parish enthusiasm more easily maintained, and the whole work of a Christian congregation much better done. There could scarcely be a greater change in a city of a hundred thousand people than has thus been wrought within the limits of the parishes of a single denomination, and the change is notable as a change in the right direction. It is understood that, by working upon the free-church basis, all of these parishes are in a more prosperous condition than they ever were before."

A Roman Catholic pastor of a flourishing church writes:

"Entrance to the church is absolutely free to all. Those who are unable to pay pew-rent have seats appointed for them, and nobody but the trustees know whether they pay or not. Those who do not wish to rent seats may put into the plate as it passes around whatever they wish, or nothing, if that suits them better."

Free seats and weekly contributions are old New England institutions. Governor Hutchinson, after 1760, wrote that the ministers of the several churches in the town of Boston have ever been supported by a free weekly contribution; and John Cotton, who left a munificent preferment in the old country, maintained that this was the apostolic method of supporting religious institutions.

One who has had great success in this free-seat experiment tells us that "the book-keeping is very simple. A folio is ruled on the left for the names of weekly contributors, then a little square for each Sunday in the year. Each week the name is checked if the contribution is received. At the end of each quarter a circular is sent to each one whose offerings have fallen behind, the amount of the delinquency being stated."

But even if well started, the system will not run of itself. A number of churches have been successful in the beginning, while, after a time, the plan has failed from lack of an occasional fresh impetus. Though it may bear more abundant fruit than the old method, it requires far more labor on the part of ministers.

The chief features of this method, and also of the common one of pew-rentals, have been tersely set forth by an experienced clergyman:

"The renting of pews gives the rich an advantage over the poor, in respect of locality;

"It draws a line of distinction between rich and poor in the place from which most of all it should be excluded;

"It thus deprives the poor of the Gospel, actually if not necessarily;

"It teaches those who *do* pay rents to regard the money thus employed, not as an offering to God, a part of worship as really as prayer, but a worldly secular transaction which they may discontinue at their option without incurring guilt;

"Pew-rentals make only heads of families responsible for, and interested in, the support of the church; and thus the children are deprived of their right to aid the Christian work, according to their ability.

"On the other hand, the free-seat, secret-envelope system realizes Christ's ideal of a universal Christian brotherhood;

"Gives to each one the same title to all the rights and privileges in the house of God;

"Removes from the church the spirit of exclusiveness, breaks up cliques, banishes clannishness;

"Makes all the money given a part of worship, an expression of love to God, not money paid for a pew, a choir, a minister;

"Brings the church to the masses;

"Cultivates the habit of systematic benevolence;

"Makes each one, old and young, personally responsible;

"Keeps the church in the memory of some who are in danger of forgetting it;

"Secures a greater regularity in church attendance;

"Gives the transient worshiper an opportunity to express his thanksgiving to God and his interest in the Gospel to which he listens."

Yet with all these arguments in its favor, it may not be the best system for every place. There are conscientious pastors and churches that decidedly prefer pew-rentals. In such cases, if the aristocratic, exclusive spirit so out of character with God's house is effectually banished, and a sympathetic, hearty church hospitality be extended to all comers, especially to the poor, if the masses are reached and held, one of the present objections to this system will be removed. This being settled, the main point is that people should be as ready, to say the least, to pay for their church privileges as for any others. Where there is a lack here, they should be so trained that they will come up squarely to the Christian requirements.

III

PARISH BUILDINGS

I

THE CHURCH: FEATURES AND MATERIALS

AS the home of the oldest, the most sacred, and, in its essential features, the most unchanging of all human institutions, no argument is needed to prove that churches ought in their construction to be models of thoroughness and durability. Hospitals for the sick should be destroyed annually; every manufacturer in this inventive age expects his mill to be radically changed, if not wholly rebuilt, before it is a half-century old; educational buildings become antiquated, the lavish expenditure bestowed upon them diminishing rather than increasing their usefulness; and while an old house that has been a blessed home for centuries, perhaps, is often delightful to see and always to be respected, practical housekeepers prefer modern methods, modern styles, and modern comforts to antiquated dignity and sentimental associations. But divine worship, the essential purpose for which churches are built, is the same to-day as it was in the days of Paul and of Abraham, of Adam and of the unnumbered millions—idolatrous heathens, we call them—that preceded him. Then as now men gathered themselves together to declare their reverence for the infinite power that made and rules the universe. The spirit of worship has been the same through the long ages, and that external methods have changed but gradually is shown by the ease and avidity with which the structures prepared for their own use by the earlier generations of men have been appropriated by their successors who believed that theirs was the one true worship and everything else was vain idolatry.

Churches should be solid, genuine, permanent. Now the first thing necessary for permanence in a church, or in anything else, is a good foundation. It must be built upon a rock. The rock may be crushed, sand or gravel, but it must be unmistakably rock. Fresh-water bog will not answer, nor salt marsh. Wooden piles of the most approved pattern and lasting stock are an unworthy support for a superstructure of massive masonry. We have no sure evidence that they will uphold it, while money enough to pay for it could be earned by honest industry.

Having this solid foundation, nothing is entirely satisfactory for the building itself but the most durable materials. In these we are embarrassingly rich. Thanks to the marvelously cheap transportation of modern times, the numerous varieties of building-stones scattered over the country, from the moss-covered bowlders in the pastures to the variegated and polished marbles from the quarries, are available everywhere. Bricks abound of many hues, venerable and everlasting as granite itself; there is no apparent limit to the use of terra cotta, glazed and unglazed; iron and other metals lend themselves readily to building construction, and certain cements are of great service. Decidedly it is not for want of abundant resources that our buildings are poor and perishable.

It is a lasting pity that our laboriously pious and piously laborious New England ancestors did not build their houses and churches of stone and their fences of wood, instead of the reverse, provided, of course, the buildings had been in their way as well constructed as the fences were. Had they done so, their descendants would not now be willing, as they often are, to sell the same farms—houses, lands, fences and all—for half of what the fences cost. Perhaps it was a part of their nature to shut themselves in and the rest of the world out by barriers that came to be considered of more value than what the barriers inclosed.

At all events, the fashion was set, and the impression still prevails that bricks and stone are unsuitable for building churches, unless the worldly wealth to be invested is ample, not merely for necessities, but for what, in other directions, would be reckoned luxuries. This is true to a limited extent only, for bricks and stone may be so employed that their cost will be but a small percentage above that of well-constructed wooden walls. Timidity, ignorance, and vanity usually stand in the way of this simple and natural use of the more lasting materials. And yet dignity and long service are to be found in wood. If protected from dampness, dry-rot, and the attrition of the weather and other external influences, no one knows how many thousand years it will endure. It may, indeed, be consumed by fire, but is not as liable to accidental burning as it appears to be, unless put together in the very manner most favorable to its swift and uncontrollable combustion. Unfortunately, this is precisely the arrangement usually adopted instead of a "slow-burning" construction, which is always practicable, scarcely more expensive than the ordinary modes, and far more beautiful in appearance. The degree of folly and deceit that enter into the composition of wooden churches, and, it may be said of most cases, into the wooden part of all churches, spires, roof-trusses, pinnacles and window-frames, is simply appalling. All things work together for good for them that love honesty in building. Straightforward truthfulness in construction is more safe, more economical, more durable, and vastly more beautiful than any possible form of architectural hypocrisy, whether the hypocrisy consists in barefaced deception or in the introduction of members that are genuine in themselves but useless on account of their false position.

With reasonable care in building the wooden part of a church, whether that includes the entire structure, or only the floors, roof, or spire, there is little danger to be feared from terrestrial fires. Lightning and incendiaries belong to other realms. Even for wooden buildings as commonly constructed, dampness and stagnant air are foes as destructive as fire, and far more insidious. A wet cellar is an abomination; doubly abominable when the air is drawn directly from it to feed the furnaces. Even in dry places there is some moisture constantly rising from the earth under a large building, and whatever open space there may be below the first floor should be thoroughly ventilated. The surface of the ground beneath the building should be paved with stones, bricks, or concrete, and covered with a coat of asphaltum, which is more nearly impervious to air and moisture than any other available material. This should also extend through the outside walls above the surface of the ground, to prevent the dampness of the earth from rising by capillary attraction. To erect a wooden building upon a stone or brick foundation, no matter how solid it may be, and leave the main sills and floor-beams in such a situation that they will inevitably and speedily decay is worse than wasteful; it is stupid. But neither utility nor economy can bring any strong arguments in favor of wooden churches, and from other stand-points there is still less to be said in their favor.

II

STYLE OF THE BUILDING

IT appears to be a natural step from material to style, because constructive shapes appropriate in wood, for instance, are clearly unsuitable for stone, and are, therefore, incurably ugly. The converse is equally true; yet the distinguishing glory of the greater part of our ecclesiastical wooden architecture lies in its shallow and unmeaning but pretentious imitation of designs that have no structural merit or beauty of form unless they are executed in stone. To say that this is atrocious vanity is as trite as to affirm that it is wrong to tell lies. The righteous use of material is, in fact, a question of morals rather than of taste. The appropriate style for a church or any other building, whatever its material, is that which most clearly and earnestly expresses the purpose for which it is erected. Because we do not act upon this self-evident principle, our architectural progress is slow, and our architectural failures, both sacred and secular, are many.

It is evident, then, that the structure which is the outgrowth of the spirit of divine worship should by its visible form excite our reverent admiration and delight. As far as such qualities can be ascribed to inanimate things, it should always be peaceful, harmonious, dignified, and gracious — as widely removed on the one hand from cold solemnity and forbidding gloom as it is from vain and brilliant display on the other; but to fix a boundary that will include the cheerful grace and brightness that are appropriate and desirable in a house of worship, and shut out the ostentation of wealth and artistic fancy that often take possession of the sacred edifice, is as difficult as drawing the line between manfully standing up for our own rights and selfishly trenching on the rights of others.

To the question how this appropriate and dignified style is to be secured the common answer would be, by following the best examples of existing church architecture, which by their inherent character as well as by long and hallowed associations excite profound and reverent emotions. How far it is well to deviate from these honored examples in adapting our work to our circumstances and what we call our practical needs will always be an open question; for until all men are cast in one mold, we shall have a conservative and a progressive element in ecclesiastical architecture as well as in theology itself. Here and there among the progressives may be found a reformer of unreasoning faith and courage who is ready to bury the dead past forever, and, despising the things that are behind, press forward to an architectural dispensation entirely new. The most of us are willing to accept and adopt from the past whatever is available for our purposes; not that we may become its servants, or servile imitators, but that it may serve us.

Without doubt, the grandest examples of architecture which the world has ever seen are the structures that have been considered sacred by those who erected them, from the earliest pagan temples down through the long, long ages to the latest Christian sanctuary. They are of necessity the best, for they called into action the noblest powers of their builders and expressed their highest aspirations. It can hardly be doubted that the pitiful failures in much of our modern church building may be justly ascribed to a confusion of ideas as to the real purpose of the church and a practical infidelity concerning its character and mission.

Even when the faith is clear and the purpose strong, there are two very different points of view. If the church is simply a place in which to be good, where we are to receive spiritual nourishment directly from heaven or through a heaven-appointed minister, a haven of rest and peace, a harbor of refuge from the ills and dangers that beset us in the outside world, to which at stated intervals we resort for refreshment and repose, then it is easy to build in accordance with that lofty purpose. If it is a luminous center of a beneficent activity, from which not alone gospel truth, but helpful and elevating influences of all kinds are to be dispensed in the most direct and efficient manner possible, this, too, is a purpose for which it need not be difficult to plan wisely and appropriately. To combine suitable provision for serving in the most effective manner these two widely differing but not antagonistic purposes is a problem which the earlier architects had apparently no occasion to solve.

Yet, surely, it is not impossible to build a church that shall be in the best sense thoroughly ecclesiastical in its general form and in its special detail and at the same time faithfully adapted to its legitimate modern uses, which are by no means identical with those of the early life of Christianity, when the most of the buildings from which we are expected to draw our best architectural instruction and inspiration were designed.

III

THE INTERIOR

FOR obvious reasons the chief difficulty in the modern problem lies in the interior. The auditorium must always be solemn, dignified, impressive; with grandeur and magnificence added if they are within our reach. At the same time it must be cheerful and warm; fresh as to its atmosphere, pure and clean. The minister must be able to see each member of his congregation without peering around posts and otherwise taxing his vision, and the congregation must not be driven into an unsanctified condition of weariness and vexation by painful efforts to see and hear the minister. There are plenty of good people in the world, if not of it, who appear to think that the sun ought not to shine on their devotions; that spiritual emotions are most active and profound when the shadows are deep and the lights are dim. Perhaps this is true; it is what the modern miracle-workers claim. But it should not be forgotten that our perceptions, physical, mental, and moral, are most easily led astray in the drowsiness, that is sometimes honestly mistaken for devoutness, and is apt to be induced by darkness. To avoid this danger the auditorium should be light. It should likewise be of such shape that the congregation when seated may be as compact as possible. The most remote listeners should not be farther from the pulpit than the width of the main body of the church, and the nearer the body of the seats approaches the form of a sector of not more than seventy-five degrees, the pulpit being the center, the more successful will be the gospel dispensation. Within this area unoccupied parks and boulevards should be avoided. Whatever the pastor may have reason to expect as to the final dispersion of his flock, he will not wish to see a great gulf prematurely fixed between those on his right and those on his left, in the shape of a broad, vacant aisle stretching away in front of the altar even to the uttermost end of the nave, which compels him to look two ways on Sunday and address the divided halves of his congregation alternately.

Remote and apparently inaccessible galleries, tempting haunts for scoffers and the disorderly, are not desirable, though a graceful extension of the main body of the seats into wide, spreading, elevated wings is necessary to bring a large number of people into pleasant auditory relations with the speaker.

As to the height, position, and style of the pulpit, desk, table, or platform, these things should be left, within certain limits, to the personal taste and feeling of him who is to occupy them. If he likes to make an elevated and ornamental appearance, if he wishes to impress his hearers by the height from which he condescends to address them and the magnificence of his sacerdotal robes and ecclesiastical equipment, he will incline to a high perch and a broad arena of velvet carpet and other decorative furnishings between himself and the front ranks of his people. If he strives, rather, for the closest personal sympathy with those whom he would instruct and lead, he will prefer a low, broad platform, and to take his stand so near as to seem to be almost in the very midst of his congregation.

Doubtless there will always be a difference of opinion and of practice in these non-essentials, at least so long as there are ministers who feel the need of external aids and specially ecclesiastical surroundings in order to enter heartily into the spirit of their sacred duties, and as long as there are devout people who would scarcely recognize or enjoy a divine ministration or utterance unless it came to them in familiar guise, and by the channels through which they are accustomed to receive their spiritual food.

In the arrangement of the choir and organ there will be a similar diversity of opinion. Churches have been rent in twain, and the Gospel banner trailed in the dust, time and again on account of the discords that have been struck in the very act of singing God's praises. Shall the members of the congregation whose hearts and voices are as tuneful as David's harp of solemn sound keep silence while incomprehensible music is performed by an invisible choir? Or shall the holy service of song be made a confusion of unholy sounds by the zealous outpouring of the untrained but sonorous voices that are so ready to be lifted up and so unwilling to be put down?

If the choir alone is to be heard, shall it also be seen? Devout and sensitive persons who close their eyes in ecstasy, and in order that the sense of hearing may be all the more keen and delightful, say no. They would have the choir above, behind and out of sight, that they may be sensible only of the rich harmony that helps to raise their thoughts in adoration. To see these singers is to divert their minds, and bring them at once into a vain and trifling mood. Others do not and can not thoroughly feel the music even of a brass band, unless they can see the swelling cheeks of the players. Especially is devotional music lost upon them if they cannot distinctly hear and understand the words, an auditory success not often achieved under the most favorable circumstances. Such differences of opinion are radical, and will never be wholly removed. But there are plain and potent reasons why the choir, if there is one, should be near the minister. He must be not only in close sympathy but in close and constant communication with them during the devotional exercises in which they participate. He might, indeed, have a speaking-tube to the opposite end of the church, or a system of signals, flags, or electric lights, by the aid of which he could secure their prompt and intelligent coöperation. It is much simpler to give them a position near him; and considering how extremely awkward it is for those who wish to face the music to turn around in their seats to do so if the singers are behind them, and how easily those who do not wish to see them can bow their heads or close their eyes, the most Christian compromise would seem to be effected by teaching the choir how to behave properly in church and giving them a place with the organ somewhere near the minister — whether directly behind him or at one side would depend upon the size and proportions of the auditorium.

Concerning the lighting, heating, and interior finishing of churches there are certain obvious points, the mention of which seems, like the prayers of the Pharisees and the song of the katy-dids, a vain repetition; but as long as building committees persist in doing foolish things, they must expect to be instructed according to their folly, and not according to their wisdom.

To build a church at great expense and then, for the sake of saving an almost inappreciable percentage of its cost, or of giving a job to a favorite deacon whose scientific knowledge is inferior to his doctrinal soundness, compelling one-fourth of the congregation to stay at home on cold Sundays, and rewarding the other three-fourths for their zeal by giving them positive discomfort and possible pneumonia; to shut out from country and village churches the beauty of trees and skies and distant hill-tops by horrible caricatures of adoring but distracted-looking saints, depicted in colored glass and lead; to profane Scripture texts by employing them for doubtfully decorative purposes in such fantastic typography that they might as well be Egyptian hieroglyphics or unmeaning arabesques; to set the preacher directly in front of a gorgeous light or in line with the blue and green rays of a stained-glass window, and expect to catch the expression of his eyes or the play of his features; to take the air that has been stagnating in darkness for an indefinite period within the damp stone walls of a church, and, drawing it down into the cellar, send it back again by way of a red-hot, cast-iron furnace, to choke an innocent and helpless congregation till they are unable to distinguish between conviction of sin and the oppression of foul air; to construct a resounding cavern in which a single human voice resounds and reverberates like the sound of a waterfall among the mountains or a "fog-bell on a rock-bound coast," call it an "auditorium," and say to the audience, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear," if he can,—all these things are inexcusably stupid, not to say unchristian, but they must not be suffered to go unpunished until the building committees have learned to avoid them, and parish committees have learned to correct them, in the buildings that were constructed in the days of ignorance when such faults were winked at.

IV

HEATING AND VENTILATION

HEATING and ventilating are so intimately connected and mutually dependent that it is hardly possible to consider them separately. The first practical step in warming a church, or any other room that is to be occasionally occupied by a large number of people, should be taken before starting the fires. All the doors, windows, and ventilators should be opened to their fullest capacity, whatever the outside temperature may be, and closed as soon as the fires are kindled. The church is then full of pure, cold air. Whether this is warmed by steam or hot-water pipes or radiators, by hot-air furnaces or by stoves, the heated body that is to impart the warmth should be inclosed by a vertical pipe or case long enough to cause a rapid upward movement of the air within it. If there is not a sufficient distance from the floor of the church downward to the source of the heat, which is not likely to be the case, unless the air is heated to a much higher temperature than it ought to be, this inclosing pipe or case should be carried up through the auditorium, either in or beside an outer wall, and the higher it extends, the upper end being, of course, within the room, the sooner will all the air in the room pass over the warming surfaces. There is no objection to heating the upper air first, for the simple reason that it is impossible to do otherwise. The cold air will remain near the floor while it is cold, as surely as water will sink below oil.

While the church is unoccupied and all the air it contains is fresh and pure, it may be drawn directly to the heating chamber around the furnace or radiators. Indeed, it would be a serious waste of fuel not to do this. But when the auditorium is filled with living, breathing, perspiring people, the fresh supply should come from out-of-doors, and the air that is withdrawn to make room for it should be sent where it will not be breathed again till it has gathered new strength and lost all its impurities.

Undoubtedly there is comfort, especially to those of warm hearts and cold feet, in a heated pipe passing along each pew. But this would be a sort of private solace and luxury like the old-fashioned foot stoves; and though it is possible to obtain sufficient warmth, it is not easy to regulate heat introduced in this way, or to make it assist directly in the important work of ventilation. If there were no other objection to it, there is likely to be confusion when the occupants of the pews are left to do in an irregular way what can only be successfully accomplished by an autocratic sexton of the rarest skill and judgment backed up by an infallible thermometer.

Unless the auditorium is very large, the heating, if arranged on the general principle explained above, may be accomplished from one end or side of the room, the warmed air rising rapidly through the vertical pipe, passing steadily across the upper part of the room to the opposite side, where it will as steadily but more slowly descend, and move back again near the floor to the ventilating outlet underneath the place of its entrance — to set forth small things by great, somewhat after the manner of the trade-winds. Of course this peaceful and salubrious flow will not be as constant as those mighty breezes, nor even sufficiently so for the comfort of the congregation, if the walls and the roof are full of cracks and crannies, and if the outer doors are allowed to stand open. It will also be obstructed by galleries, unless they are partially detached from the outer walls by open straits and channels. As usually built, a gallery forms a pocket, or rather a pair of pockets, of stagnant air, a hot one above and a cold one below. This is a case where pockets are improved by having holes in them.

So much has been said and written about ventilation that it has come to be considered a most abstruse and difficult matter. This is a mistake. The common sense and mechanical knowledge required to sail an ordinary catboat would ventilate to perfection the largest church that ever was built. We have only to remove the impure atmosphere in the room and put fresh air in its place as rapidly as possible, and the familiar fact that warm air is lighter than cold is the principle on which hang all the law and the prophets, as regards successful ventilation. Everybody is supposed to be perfectly well aware of this fact, and yet everybody, from the sexton who makes the fires to the scientific professor who invents the "perfect sanitary heating and ventilating apparatus, especially adapted to school-houses, churches, and public buildings," seems to ignore it in practice.

A uniform system of ventilation is impossible, because there are two distinct and almost opposite conditions to be taken into account—cold weather and warm weather. In the former, the fresh air must be brought in warm and it must be saved as far as possible. In the latter, the warm air may be allowed to escape freely and that which takes its place may be cool. Summer ventilation is an extremely simple affair. If there are openings in the ceiling or roof, the higher up the better, the warm air in the room will rise by its own levity and pass out-of-doors. The practical fault in this kind of warm-weather ventilation is that the outlets are usually about one-tenth as large as they ought to be to accomplish their purpose thoroughly. Unless the building is on fire, the air will not rush upward as water pours through a mill-race or like the blast of a smelting furnace, but will have a gentle upward movement scarcely perceptible except by delicate tests. To expect the whole volume of air contained in a large building to be drawn up through an opening two or three feet square several times during a single service is absurd.

Using the common phrase, I said the warm air would rise by its own levity. As a matter of fact it does not rise at all unless borne on the shoulders of the cooler and heavier air beneath it. Consequently, unless mechanical means are used to drive it out, the cool air admitted near the floor must be recognized as the active means of ventilation. The openings for its entrance should be well distributed around the room, and they should exceed in area the outlets, because in the varying directions of the wind it will be found that only a portion of them will be active at once. Open doors and windows for this purpose are a delusion and a snare, whereby the few who sit near them are sacrificed for the comfort of the many; neither should the cold air be brought from the cellar, unless the congregation need an experimental reminder of the charnel house. Openings through the outer walls near the floor should be guarded by valves and dampers that will divert and control the direct currents, or they will be no better than open windows. Undoubtedly the purest air comes from above. If this could be drawn down through the top of the spire, which is by no means impossible, the occupants of the building would be greatly blest. In close quarters, that is, in cities and towns, the outside mouth of the flues should surely be above all danger from the stagnant atmosphere of narrow alleys and areas, which is sure to be of the earth earthy. The best arrangement for the inside opening is to have floor registers in the aisles where no one will be obliged to sit over them, and from which the entering current of cold air will be diffused gradually and without annoyance.

Once more, then, if the outlets and inlets, arranged as I have described them, are ample, far more so than usually found, there will be thorough ventilation without opening doors or windows. It will be still more active in hot, sunny days, if flues are made between the rafters that slope toward the sun, the lower end of the flues at the level of the eaves opening into the room, and the other at the apex of the roof opening into the outer air.

The foregoing relates to warm-weather ventilation. When the building is warmed by "artificial heat," the conditions are reversed. The fresh, warm air must not be allowed to escape through the openings at the top of the room, and that which lies down among the pews, chilling the congregation like a wind of false doctrine, must be removed. It cannot be drawn out through holes in the outside walls like water from a tank, for the reason that the outer air is colder and heavier, and would, therefore, press inward. If it were stagnant it might be warmed where it lies, but since it must be constantly changed, the cold air at the bottom of the room must be steadily exhausted to make room for the fresh, warm air which, however it is introduced, will fill the highest places first and can only be coaxed to descend when the colder stratum that supports it has been withdrawn. This, of course, may be done by machinery, exhaust fans or other contrivance, but the heat that will be needed to run the engine that drives the machine will probably accomplish more if applied directly to smooth vertical flues, through which the air may be drawn as in chimneys. These, too, must be not merely ample in size, say about ten times as large as usual, but they must be heated to a temperature many degrees above that desired for the room itself. A leaky pump may be made to "draw" by pouring in a pint of water, and on similar principles it is often expected that a gas-jet, a few feet of steam-pipe, or even a lighted match, will "start the current" in a ventilating flue, and that it will work happily forever after. But the pump will not continue to draw unless somebody keeps on working the handle; neither will the ventilating shaft, unless the air that is passing through it is kept constantly warmer than the air that is lying at the base where the "draught" begins. Other things being equal, the higher these warm ventilating shafts are carried, the more effective they will be. Not a whit less important than chimneys, there is no reason why their presence should not be as frankly acknowledged, no reason why they should not be an essential feature in the architectural composition of every building in which fresh air is a necessity; that is to say, in every building occupied by human beings. Churches, of all structures, with their varied details, buttresses, pilasters, turrets, pinnacles, towers, and spires, can plead no lack of opportunity in their construction and design for ample ventilating shafts and flues. The only obstacles are thoughtlessness, ignorance, and stupidity. Towers and spires may be made especially serviceable in promoting perfect ventilation; nor would such beneficent utility detract in the least from their essential beauty. They would still point heavenward and declare the Christian faith, while directly promoting the temporal welfare of those who gather around them.

V

SHAMS AND AFFECTATIONS

I HAVE said that the chief difficulty in adapting former styles to modern needs and uses lies in the interior, and have endeavored to indicate briefly why this is the case. The old ecclesiastical monuments that, to use a carnal phrase, have "set the fashions" for church work, albeit followed at such enormous distances, cared little for warmth or fresh air, still less for abundant light, acoustic virtues, and other comforts for listening congregations, all of which must be regarded in the modern structure. But it cannot be affirmed that the most conspicuous failures, from the architectural stand-point, are within.

The Christian Church is said to be responsible for a vast amount of cruelty to the human race, and surely there can be nothing in its way more painful and damaging to the wholesome artistic instincts of an innocent people than the architectural crimes that have been committed in its service. Like many other crimes committed in the name of religion, these seem to spring from excessive zeal planted in the soil of ignorance. Instead of seeking first the kingdom of architectural righteousness, that is, of simple truth in design and construction, frantic efforts are made to produce an outside appearance that cannot possibly be considered "secular." Forms and features must be created that are supposed to belong to a "sacred" style of work, no matter how cheap the material, how limited the resources, how feeble the skill, or shallow the pretense. A common fault in many otherwise excellent designs is the combination of materials, faultless in themselves, but of strongly contrasting colors. This is nearly always an unworthy expedient, a confession of incompetence and inadequate resources, a sign of a desire for superficial display fatal to all dignity and repose.

Still more common and deplorable are the minor follies—the stone buttresses made of wood; brick piers, crumbling as to their joints and warped by the sun, perched as pinnacles above useless, weather-stained buttresses, and crowned with sheet-iron head-dresses of strange device; stained-glass windows made of paper and, using theological currency, having about the same value as natural righteousness, filthy rags. Doubtless these things and many others of the same sort would be beneath notice, but for the unhappy fact that they exist in great abundance and are, alas, only too well preserved. Yet there is no excuse for their existence. They are not merely unnecessary, but, in all new buildings at least, they are ridiculous and culpable to the last degree. Under the guidance of cultivated taste and skill, which can always be obtained, they are impossible. Even where already existing they can in many cases be rendered comparatively inoffensive. The worthless wood-work may be heroically removed like an offending right hand, the tottering turrets may be toppled over,—give them time enough, and they will come down of their own accord,—the windows may be washed, and the gaudy colors of the exterior may be reduced to sobriety by a wholesome coat of paint. Upon a wooden building paint or an equivalent is indispensable; brick walls are not injured by it as regards durability,—quite the contrary,—and in appearance it is almost a necessity to them. Perhaps it is possible to build a brick church that will be thoroughly dignified and satisfactory without artificial coloring, provided it is not streaked and spotted with light-colored stone, variegated terra cotta, or mourning bands of tar, but of those already in existence I should say it is impossible to reverence or admire them until they are painted. But the right use and the true value of color are rarely understood, even by those who think themselves in this direction wise unto salvation, and paint is, therefore, liable to destroy as well as to save.

Beyond question, every church dedicated to divine worship should be as beautiful as human hands can make it—not with the beauty of fashion, but with the beauty of holiness. For this, no other foundation is possible than that of absolute truthfulness—truth in material, in design, and in motive. The simple, direct, and faithful expression of our noblest sentiments and aspirations is the sole authority in sacred or in secular architecture, from whose decisions there is no appeal. Present fashions and long-established customs must alike obey its dictates. When this expression is sincere, and not a fanciful indulgence or an esthetic affectation, all humble uses and practical needs will be as faithfully served as what we are accustomed to call our higher emotions and our spiritual wants. We may still devote our finest skill and dearest possessions to sacred purposes without neglecting the claims of common usefulness. There is truth in the assertion that if we take care of the beautiful the useful will take care of itself; there is a more profound truth in its converse if we rightly apprehend the height, the depth, and the boundless comprehensiveness of divinely beneficent utility.

VI

UNPRODUCTIVE PROPERTY

ONE of the most serious external advantages under which our churches labor is the comparative unproductiveness of church property.

When we consider the church as an institution designed to attract the attention of men in the community, and lead them to certain courses of life and development, we see that it is surrounded by a great number of other institutions or influences, some friendly, some rival, and some hostile to its objects. In a certain necessary part of its work the church comes into competition with organizations that tend to lead men in the opposite direction. The work of all such agencies involves, to some extent, the use of property. Unfortunately, while money devoted to secular uses pays about six per cent., money devoted to church uses pays about one per cent. Let me explain — for I mean not literally, but comparatively.

Property devoted to secular uses is commonly used every week day. Some property devoted to religious purposes is in use also through the week, such as the buildings of a theological school, the funds of many missionary societies, mission schools, tract societies, publication houses, etc. But a church edifice is used only one day in the week, and then only for four or five hours.

If the people of a village build a public library, a schoolhouse, and a church, the two former are available for use six days in the week, the latter only one. In this sense, church property earns for the cause to which it is devoted only one per cent., while secular property earns six.

Here are two buildings on opposite corners of the same street. One is a brown-stone church, with spire, pillars, cushioned pews, and fine organ. With the ground, it cost one hundred thousand dollars. Opposite is a block of buildings containing a retail liquor store, or "grog-shop," a concert saloon, a public billiard-room, and, upstairs, with curtained windows, a faro-bank. These all cost far less than the church; they are running day and night, or, to speak more correctly, nearly sixteen hours out of the twenty-four every week-day, and to some extent on Sunday. They are in productive use at least one hundred hours a week. The church is endeavoring to counteract their influence on society, with four hours on Sunday. It is as plain as the rule of three can make it. One dollar invested in establishing a nursery of vice is turned over so often that it is equal to twenty-five invested in a church. If the reader thinks this an exaggerated estimate, let him take into account, while he corrects it, the additional fact that the establishment of vice brings income to its keeper, while the church, beside the fixed capital appropriated to it, maintains its service at a constant annual expenditure which represents about an equal additional amount of capital.

Before inquiring what are the reasons why this is so, let me guard against misapprehension by two suggestions. In the first place, it ought not to be considered that it is wrong to devote property to church uses on account of this difficulty. Nor is it even inexpedient. It is no reason why I should not buy a picture for my walls, that I am away at business all day, and can only look at it while resting at home in the evening. It is no reason why I should not buy a fine fishing-rod, that I may use it once a year in a brief vacation in June. And the fact that churches are opened only one day in the week is no reason why we should not build churches. But it is well to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the case; and realize what immense resources, now dormant, would be brought into active service if church property could be utilized continuously.

The other suggestion is the importance of the subject, when we consider the aggregate of the resources involved. The question is not to be dismissed with the thought that the additional use which could be made of any particular edifice would not amount to much. That is the very difficulty. Church property is not only disused, while all other property is useful, but it is, to a great extent, incapacitated from being used; and this is true of a vast domain, an immense estate.

The church property in the States of the Union (excluding that held by denominations not in sympathy with general evangelical doctrines) is probably at this time about three hundred and fifty millions of dollars. I have no means of estimating what proportion of this may be in the funds or other secular assets of endowed churches, of which there are a number in the older settled parts of the country; but all would probably agree that, excluding all invested funds, the value of church edifices and ground must be far more than one-half the total church property — say two hundred millions. The property of this character in the city of New-York alone is estimated at thirty millions. We may say, therefore, that our churches in this country lose the use, six days out of seven, of two hundred millions of dollars. If we consider the annual value of this to be seven per cent., it equals fourteen millions of dollars. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that two millions of dollars a year is paid to keep the churches open on Sunday, and twelve millions is paid to keep them shut during the week. If it were possible to devise means for making church property serve its legitimate uses in advancing the moral and religious welfare of mankind during the week, the resources of the churches in this work would be increased by twelve millions per annum.

What, then, are the reasons why church property is unused? In the first place, it is said that few people would go to church on a week-day, if the service were held. Making all allowance for the gradual increase of attendance that might be expected, there can be no doubt that the number attending ordinary "service" on a week-day would always be very small compared with Sunday. The usages of the Sunday service have grown up in connection with the character of the day, and they are not what the people feel the need of every day.

If it is proposed to give more scope to the uses of the church building, we find that as such edifices are usually planned, especially the more expensive ones, they are unfitted for most other uses. Again, there is a feeling in a large number of minds in reference to the walls and furniture of the church akin to that which the Jews felt for their temple — that it should be sacred to express and formal worship, to the homage of the Deity and the ceremonies of devotion. And in many minds, where no remnant of such an opinion remains, there are strong and tender associations connected with the interior of the house, and great unwillingness to see anything unusual or unaccustomed within its walls. It is natural for those who do not fully share these feelings to deprecate them; but it ought to be observed that where these feelings exist they are very closely connected with the faith and the efficient service of those who cherish them; and those who consider such feelings not wholly reasonable serve no good purpose by wounding them. Moreover, such feelings are generally strongly localized. It will be found that they apply to the existing building, with its old associations, but are not easily transferred to a strange building, and are slow to connect themselves with a new one.

Another circumstance that hinders the more general use of church property is the extent to which private rights exist in the pews of a majority of the churches, especially those built in the first half of this century and the more costly of city churches. The owner of a pew naturally feels as if his property were used and depreciated without any consideration for his own benefit if the house is freely opened, even for good causes. Theoretically there is a curious incongruity between my objecting to the public use of the house, because it is exclusively the house of God, and also because a pew in it belongs exclusively to me; but one who entertains such an incongruity is not likely to be conscious of it even when it is pointed out to him.

From these and similar reasons it is not likely that existing edifices will to any great extent be utilized in the week-time, nor, perhaps, is it desirable that all ever should be. Yet within the limits prescribed by a just respect to the wishes of all those entitled to have a preference, it is plain that any such enlargement of the beneficent uses of such property is a clear gain.

In respect to new buildings the subject is of far greater importance. The success of the association buildings, which the young men have established in our larger cities, shows that property can be used to advantage every day in the week for the cause of religion. In many a village where there are four or five empty churches, locked from Sunday at three till next Sunday at nine, there is not a well-adapted and attractive place to gather the people for a Sunday-school convention, or a choir union, or a jubilee singers' concert, or a patriotic or scientific lecture, or an anniversary celebration, or a union meeting on any of those occasions when our citizens wish to get together for sympathy or public gratulation.

Were it found feasible to enlarge the uses of a part of our church property thus under proper restrictions, and with a view to bring all classes under the influence of the church, and into its place of worship, it cannot be doubted that the moral power exerted by it would be multiplied, and the present unfortunate unproductiveness of church property much relieved.

IV

THE PASTOR AT HOME

I

THE PARSONAGE

I DO not mean simply an edifice, respectable or otherwise, which has been appropriated for a certain parish purpose. The word has a far broader import. As the term church includes the inner temple within the outer, a soul within the body, so does that of the parsonage, whether built of brick, wood, or clay, include the idea of the gospel ministry. It is a kind of porch, whose history runs along with that of the church; and it has ever been a moral power, a center of influence in the community.

Here are the Bethels, where from primeval times Christ's ambassadors have prayed for a guilty world, and where heavenly fire has descended upon earthly altars. Here are the *sancta sanctorum*, where the mysteries of theologic science have been explored; where gospel-miners have dug out precious ores from the hidden depths of the Holy Word; where skillful hands have carefully gathered ingots of pure gold, and from the deep ocean have brought up pearls of divine truth for the enriching of the saints, for the adorning of the body of Christ.

What a story might be woven out of the thrilling events the parsonage has witnessed, from the time when the bold apostle dwelt in his own hired house at Rome, all through the ages down to the rude shelter of the early Puritan pastors on our own rock-bound coast, onward to the present day. Here the ignorant have been instructed, the wayward counseled, and the mourning comforted. Here affianced hearts have been linked together, and blessed by the nuptial benediction in His name who has made wedlock the symbol of His love for the Church.

What sins known only to God have here been confessed! what burdened hearts relieved! How many have here resolved to enter the strait and narrow way! Sometimes the parsonage has proved to the seeking pilgrim the "Wicket-gate," and again the "Palace Beautiful," where he has rested in the "Chamber of Peace" and refreshed himself by glimpses of the "Delectable Mountains."

In the good, old-fashioned pastorates the associations of a generation were gathered around the man of God. He was regarded not only as the minister, but as the father of his people. When stricken down a wail of grief went up from the whole community; and at his funeral throngs of reverent mourners followed in the long procession from the parsonage to the church, and thence to the quiet "God's-acre" lying in its shadow.

The manse, the rectory, and the parsonage (for are they not one?), what sacred memories cluster around these homes of the prophets! They constitute a line of glittering lights, illumining the stream of history for eighteen hundred years. Blot out these lights, and what darkness and desolation would ensue!

Such being the history and the influence of the parsonage, we should take it for granted that every parish would make a point of securing for its pastor a permanent commodious home, which might thus become the center of hallowed associations. But do we not find that this is the exception rather than the rule? Out of instances more than can be reckoned, let me select two or three bearing on this subject.

On a certain occasion a clergyman having traveled some distance to visit a clerical brother, whom I will call Mr. H——, the pastor of an important church, was met by his friend at the station. After walking a little way they came into a narrow, muddy street, with a sidewalk of rotten planks, and soon brought up in front of a dark, old, tumble-down dwelling, with its shingles and clap-boards rattling in the wind, and which was backed up beside a shabby paint and cabinet shop. Pausing before its steps, which also were of rotten planks, the minister lifted his hat with a bow towards the house: "This is the parsonage. Walk in, and you shall find cheery hearts inside."

At a certain convention in one of our goodly States, a delegate, on his arrival, inquired the way to the parsonage. On reaching the designated house he concluded some trick had been played on him, and, going up street several rods, rang the bell at the door of a neat abode, only to be sent back to the grim, ghostly shell of a dwelling he had just left. The same delegate, when returning one afternoon from a drive, on coming against the house, told his friends that was his stopping-place. "Why, what sort of an Irish family have they put you into?" "The minister's," he replied. At another time, the brother of the pastor who occupied this dilapidated dwelling, coming from a distance to visit him, told the hackman to drive him to the Rev. J. Blank's. On reaching the old house, the carriage door was flung open with the accustomed "Here is your stopping-place." "You must be mistaken!" "It is the parsonage, sir." "J. never lives in a house like that!" But he did. It was the parsonage of one of the richest parishes in the State, and illustrates the truth of the saying that corporations have no souls. What is everybody's business is nobody's.

Within a few years, however, there have been great improvements in this direction. The movement in parsonage building is one of the bright omens of the day. Still, everything depends on its proper management. Only let our parishes realize what inspiration flows in from pleasant surroundings, and what educating and refining elements are contained in a convenient and tasteful edifice, and the business of erecting the parsonage will never be put into the hands of a penurious committee, who haggle in their bargains whether for God or man, and who think far less of the parson's comfort than of the parish coppers. The parsonage committee should be men of enlarged views, and, if possible, with an æsthetic eye as well.

This is a matter in which the flock are concerned almost equally with the shepherd. Many a minister is forced to ask a dismission simply for lack of a decent abode, and sometimes from finding absolutely no roof to shelter him. An excellent pastor, after twenty years in the ministry, remarked, that "upon fair computation he had spent nearly five of those years in moving from one house to another." How many parishioners dwell in palaces, while their faithful and laborious pastor is thus moving from pillar to post!

Let me give another experience. In removing to a certain parish, a minister was obliged to take up his residence in the noisiest part of the noisiest street of that wide-awake semi-city. It was at the point where every sort of a thing congregated, and where dust and profanity sifted through the windows in about equal proportions. And it was only part of a house at that. What was to be done with all the furniture and books and necessary rubbish, the accumulations of years, was a problem not easily solved. Things were crowded into the barn and the cellar-kitchen, while the eaves of the low attic gaped in wonder at the quantities wedged beneath them. Under the tables, under the beds, anywhere and everywhere, boxes and baskets were stowed away.

It was not living, but staying. Yet in all this the parson and parsoness acquiesced, in the pleasing assurance that something better would turn up: for great as had come to be their dread of moving,— and they had been led to reverse the common saying that three moves are equal to one fire, to mean that one move was equal to three fires,— they looked forward to it as the one thing to be desired; yet, as no better thing did turn up, feeling that something was better than nothing, they tried to be thankful for what shelter they had.

At length rumors filled the air that they were to be warned out of the premises. To such portentous mutterings they turned a deaf ear; but for all that the blow fell. In three months at farthest the dwelling must be vacated. Of course they went diligently into house-hunting. Reports coming to them of this abode, and of that, about to be rented, they would start off on an inquiring tour, only to hear again and again, "We have no thought of leaving." As no house could be found, would some one build for them? Here, at last, light dawned. A well-to-do carpenter, who had purchased a piece of land, was quite ready to build. The minister's wife began to erect castles in the air. She would have a veranda and a bay-window. True, there was not the least bit of an ocean-view; and this, on the sea-coast, was particularly aggravating. But then, one could n't have everything; so she was fain to content herself with thoughts of the pretty bay-window and the neat little veranda. Alas! when the minister returned from the carpenter's, he reported that the house was to be a double tenement, three stories high, right up and down, and without room for a single nice little quirk or quaver.

"Still, it will be a shelter," she comforted herself; "and I shall have room to stow away all my boxes and bags without fear of ejectment."

Suddenly came the astounding information that the whole had fallen through; that the matter-of-fact house had tumbled flat to the ground, like many a grander castle in the air.

Next the parson and his wife went scouring the region in search of building spots — through highways and byways, over rocks and pastures, in every direction where they chanced to hear of a vacant lot. But nobody cared to sell; nobody could be *induced* to sell.

As the upshot of all, they were driven to the alternative of giving up their parish and taking their departure from the town, or appropriating to themselves an ancient edifice far larger than their needs. The latter seemed the providential thing to be done, and they did it, but, you may be sure, with an increased sense of the desirableness that every parish, according to its means, should make some provision for the minister's home.

In a certain number of "The Congregational Quarterly" we are told of a Miss Baxter, who left a handsome legacy towards a parsonage, and on such conditions as to secure its speedy erection. Thrice blessed be her memory! Said the grateful occupant, who knew by contrast how to appreciate such a home: "When will parishes learn, as one of the secrets of keeping a good minister, that they must give him an assured home of comfort? The grace of patience will have sufficient occasion for exercise without driving him from pillar to post, and worrying his life out of him in constant search for a place to shelter his family. Neither is the opportunity to study promoted by setting up his library annually in a new place; nor is it made more accessible by storage in the only attic attainable, or, perchance, in the loft of a horse-shed."

Now, why should not a Miss or a Mr. Baxter spring up in every flourishing parish? Let it be understood, however, that it is not essential to the value of the benefaction that it should be post mortem. Nor need the privilege be monopolized by a single individual; for two or three, or even more, might share in it. Indeed, all the parish could have a hand in the parsonage, some planning the garden, and others setting out trees; while the lovers of art could display their taste by some fine engraving hung here and there on its cheerful walls.

Scarcely anything of an external nature could bring to the minister so much of genial influence. "I believe I shall live years longer for this fine prospect and comfortable home," remarked a clergyman who, after much trying experience in moving, at length found himself in a permanent and pleasant abode.

A commodious parsonage is sometimes the deciding point in a minister's consideration of a call. And without room enough to furnish a pleasant apartment for a study, it could hardly be regarded as commodious, unless, indeed, such a study is provided in the church. There are ministers of long experience who think it better, if a choice is open, that the study should be in one's own home, even if at the same time there is a room in the church where the pastor can be found at certain hours. This matter, however, must depend on the circumstances.

In connection with the study, a pastor's library is an addition, the advantages of which can hardly be overestimated. There are instances where this is provided for by a friend, which enables the minister to add a few volumes every year. A little thought and contrivance would make such a plan, to a greater or less extent, practicable in many of our churches.

The benefits of such a home as we are considering are by no means confined to the pastor's household. They reach every family in the parish, and every child in each family.

Thus the parsonage becomes an impersonation of the parish ideal—an attractive moral center for parish sympathies and sentiments as well as for its varied schemes of usefulness.

From their position ministers are peculiarly susceptible to such influences. They feel them in the family, in the study, in pulpit and pastoral labors, and in great and little ways too numerous to mention; and all these influences constitute iron links in binding them to their people.

II

THE PASTOR'S WIFE

NEITHER in law nor in Gospel is the minister's wife the wife or servant of the parish. She belongs to her husband and family, and to no corporate body or association. The parish has no more right to levy a tax on her time, or to dictate her mode of dress, style of living, or manner of life, than that of the lawyer's or the doctor's wife.

Yet, for their pastor's sake as well as their own, the people will feel a deep interest in his selection of a companion. No one, however wanting in spirituality, would recommend to him a mere woman of fashion, whose heart is absorbed in the trimming of a dress of the color of a bow. With such an one he might well enough take a promenade, sing a song, or play a game of croquet; but all agree that she is totally unsuited to be his partner in the sober work of life. Even irreligious people admit that a minister's wife should, like her husband, be identified in her sympathies with the kingdom which is not of this world. And the more intelligent she is, the more thorough her education, the better fitted will she be to enter into his work, and to stimulate him intellectually and morally.

It is fortunate if she proves to be his counterpart, his complement, as the beautiful Anglo-Saxon term *help-meet* signifies. All the better should her temperament differ from his, provided the differences, like certain discords in music, tend to greater harmony. A reserved man needs a wife who is frank and social; an impulsive man, one who is calm and judicious. It is particularly fortunate for the parish if their pastor's wife has the power of adapting herself to the temperament and the needs of her husband.

Variety is one of the beautiful laws of nature. Examine the myriads of leaves that line the forest-paths. Will you find any two alike? And do you ever have any difficulty in telling your own horse and cow, your hens and your cat, from those of your neighbor? So uniform is this law of variety, that the wonder always is, not the infinity of nature's molds, which is really the miracle, but when any two things happen to be so nearly alike that there is some slight trouble in distinguishing them.

The same arrangement extends into the world of humanity. Yet there are certain wiseacres who, to judge by their experiments in tinkering Nature, consider her work as bungling and botchy. The Jesuit doctors belabor their disciples, toning down willfulness, clipping off originality, chipping away idiosyncrasies, and destroying all independence, till they subdue their victims to the tamest uniformity. There have been occasional experiments something after this fashion among Protestants—an attempt to prune every offshoot of native originality, to restrain every outburst of genius, and to quash every assertion of individuality. In short, the idea has seemed to be the casting scores of girls successively into the same mold, and turning them out after the same identical pattern,—a set of pretended fine specimens of nature, when nature was the very thing crushed out of them.

They must even write the same hand, at whatever expense of time and labor. What a libel on our bounteous mother! And how incomprehensible the desire to destroy that individuality which is the soul of everything, and which is manifest even in one's chirography! For myself, it would not suit me to have the handwriting of my children, any more than their faces, just like everybody's—or, indeed, anybody's—else.

Now, a minister's wife constitutes no exception to this law of variety. In order to do justice to all concerned, she must be herself, and not somebody else. To expect her to work according to parish rules, or to walk in the exact footsteps of her predecessor, is contrary to all reason. It is her undoubted right to act out her own particular nature, to do good in her own way.

Some women have not merely a natural timidity, but also a constitutional reserve, in expressing their religious emotions. This gives them a peculiar shrinking from many of those things expected of a minister's wife. Taking part in a prayer-meeting is extremely painful, while assuming its direction is sometimes positive torture. They may be earnest Christians, but they cannot pray in the presence of others without an amount of struggling and suffering of which you have little conception. They deserve your sympathy rather than your censure; for Christ has nowhere enjoined the specific duty you require of them.

Yet, in these cases, uncharitable remarks are often made. Said a good sister to a minister's wife, whom she had reproved for not speaking in a public prayer-meeting: "Sifting the matter to the bottom, it was all pride that prevented."

Another minister's wife of this class was labored with by one of the "brethren," who affirmed that women always had a burden on their heart if they did not speak. To whom she replied that *she* sometimes had a greater one, if she did speak.

Of course, no one will understand me as in the least underrating the value or influence of female prayer-meetings. Let all who can freely mingle their hearts together, and rejoice in the privilege. Such meetings are often an important help to the minister, and a great moral power in the church. But some there are who can plead the cause of a lost world more fervently and unrestrainedly in their own closets. Do not pronounce them unfaithful or indifferent; for the incense that goes up from hidden censers is not less acceptable to the Lord. Remember that —

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

I speak warmly on this subject, because I have been a witness to the suffering of some of these retiring spirits from the misjudgments of those who could not appreciate their trials. There are women who could preside at a large meeting with entire equanimity, and who have a great facility in expressing their thoughts and feelings. Let all such be congratulated; but do not rebuke those who are not equal to such occasions. The difference between the two classes is often one of mere constitutional temperament.

In these remarks I have no reference to the question of woman's rights; though if I had, in claiming for my sex the liberty of speech I should also claim the liberty of silence. There are women as well as men who are qualified to command the attention of a large assembly; and there are men as well as women who, eloquent though they may be with the pen, never venture to speak in public.

There are soldiers of the cross who can bravely fight in the forefront of battle, marching onward to the sound of trumpets and with flying banners. And there are others, equally loyal, who shrink from the open field. Their conflicts are in the solitary wilderness, and their victories are registered only in the Lamb's book of life. Let us do all honor to the former class; but let us not be unjust to the latter, who, though in a more private way, may accomplish not less for their Master. To him they are equally dear, and they shall wear at last as bright a crown.

There are various ways in which a minister's wife, true to her individuality, may accomplish her work.

One has an affinity for children, easily entering into their joys and sorrows, and by her skill in story-telling making them her fast friends. In the public ministries of the church but little is done for this class. Sunday after Sunday, they listen to sermons of which they understand almost nothing. Occasionally a dish is prepared expressly for them, but they are not fed in their turn; they get but little "milk for babes." When a minister's wife supplements this want by feeding them herself, she performs an excellent work. Indeed, in no better way can she serve the interests of the parish; for not only does she thus reach the hearts of the parents, but the children themselves will soon be in the places of influence; and everything that molds them is of no small account.

Besides what she does for their moral and spiritual benefit, she instructs them in the etiquette of social life. She teaches them that Mr. Good-Manners is an important member of society, in whose graces it is well for them to keep; that, by his advice, boys will take off their caps or hats whenever entering a parlor or a church; and that both boys and girls will not only leave the most comfortable chairs for their elders, but will offer their own seat to any lady or gentleman who is standing; as also, that, in making visits, they will address first the lady and gentleman of the house, taking particular leave of them when they retire. She further makes a point of informing them that this same civil-spoken gentleman protests against the rowdyism of language as well as of manners; such as the calling their father "governor," and their food "grub."

By her wise management, a wonderful change in the little folk is soon visible. In no better way can the interests of the flock be served than by this watch and care over the children; and in no better way can she manifest her love to Him one of whose last charges was, "Feed my lambs."

Another minister's wife attracts an older class. By her peculiar power of adaptation, she wins the confidence of the young men and women. She interests herself in their reading and amusements; in their social and intellectual culture; in their plans, their aspirations, their day-dreamings even. She is thus able to do much in forestalling evil and strengthening them against temptation.

This one is of a particularly social nature, and goes about freely among the people; thus assisting her husband in his pastoral labors, and atoning, perhaps, for his reserve. She has the tact that enables her to drop the right word in the right place, to allay jealousy and ill-feeling, and to strengthen every good purpose; and she is always able to tell her husband where his attention is particularly needed.

That one may be said to have the gift of healing. Wherever there is sickness and suffering there she is found, bringing sunshine into darkened homes and hearts. Many a shroud is made by her gentle fingers; many a silent form is prepared by her kind hands for its last sleep; and on occasions of sorrow or of joy, wherever flowers have a loving ministry, there she is sure to be with her beautiful and fragrant offerings.

Here you find a minister's wife who, according to common parlance, has the gift of smartness. It is an easy thing for her to cut out work for a whole bevy of women; and the more she has to do in this line, the better is she satisfied. In every bone and muscle she is one of the executives, and just fitted to take the lead in all benevolent enterprises.

There you find another, whose husband is in delicate health, or who, for some reason, eschews the manual labor of writing.

She makes his correspondence one of her special cares. It may be that his sight is impaired; so she devotes much of her time to reading to him and for him, and becomes his standing amanuensis — an office which, for a minister's wife, is no sinecure.

Still another guards her husband against all unnecessary interruptions in his study-hours. She also entirely relieves him from domestic cares, taking upon herself all the economic arrangements of the family, and, if a little land is necessary to eke out a support, assuming much of its oversight.

It is related of Mrs. Timothy Edwards, the honored mother of President Edwards, that she took entire charge of the household, consisting of her husband and eleven children, with the oversight of the servants and cattle on the farm — Mr. Edwards being unable to tell his own cow from those of his neighbors, while he was equally unpractical in other directions. She thus bore on her own shoulders the whole burden of family cares, that he might devote himself wholly to his ministerial work. The parish, with good reason, continued to her the salary during the twelve years in which she survived her husband.

Now and then a minister's wife has as much as she can do in adapting herself to the peculiarities of her husband. Sometimes she cannot trust him to go into the pulpit, or even to make calls, till she has turned him round, taking a thorough survey, lest his coat may be unbrushed, his collar awry, or his cuffs soiled. If he is forgetful, absent-minded, or unpractical, she must have not only her eyes but her wits continually about her, to correct his mistakes and cover his blunders.

It is said of Dr. Backus, that in his abstract moods he would sit in his study, stirring his fire with the tongs till scarcely an ember was left; when, feeling cold, he would call for his wife to come and "mend the fire." We can imagine what would become of such a man if left to himself.

It is evident that many ministers greatly need wives with their eyes open and their wits about them; and that the parishioners, over whom such a vigilant good-will is watching from the windows of the parsonage, ought to be very thankful, not only for their pastor's sake, but also for their own.

III

THE PASTOR'S CHILDREN

ACCORDING to some, nothing very good is to be looked for from the parsonage juveniles. The world must have its frequent fling at these suspected characters, and on hearing of some naughty deed perpetrated by any one of them, it will, of course, exclaim: "Nothing better was to be expected. Ministers' children, as everybody knows, are up to all sorts of mischief."

Yet there are some things to be said on the other side. "The merest glance at successful business men," writes a leading journalist, "refutes the scandal that ministers' sons turn out badly. The son of a New England clergyman laid the foundation for the oldest religious paper in New-York. From the brain of another son came the telegraph. The son of another minister laid the Atlantic cable. The most eminent judges, lawyers, civilians, members of Congress, and princely merchants in the State are sons of New England clergymen." It might also be added that the last two Presidents of the United States have been sons of ministers.

"It has sometimes been flippantly said," writes another, "that 'ministers' and deacons' children are worse than any others.' In some exceptional cases, the very relationship has given a prominence to misdoing, has made it more noticed and talked about. But in point of fact, the statement is not true."

He then gives statistics showing that in Massachusetts and Connecticut, out of two thousand five hundred and thirty-five children of ministers and deacons, only forty — that is, two and a half per cent. of the whole number — turned out badly.

In Dr. Sprague's collection of clerical biographies, we find further confirmation on this point. Of a hundred clergymen taken from these volumes at random, we find that a hundred sons became also ministers, while the largest proportion of the others rose to professional or business eminence. And to say of any lady, 'she was the daughter of a clergyman,' is considered a guarantee of respectability and worth, both in Great Britain and America."

It cannot be denied, however, that as a rule ministers' children are overflowing with oxygen and merriment. Eager to have a hand in everything that is going on, they can hardly step out-of-doors without stumbling upon some temptation. Now, how are you to manage so as to escape perpetual fits of anxiety when they are out of sight?

To keep them within the home influence, every mother must make home attractive, at whatever cost of time and labor. Her boys, as well as her girls, must find their chief enjoyment at their own fireside. Otherwise, before she knows it, they will have slipped away from her irretrievably. It is one of the essentials that they should have amusements, or, what is a better term, entertainments. If their home does not provide them with those which are pure and elevating, they will be tempted to seek such as are low and debasing. Work of some kind with the fingers or with the brain is the chief business of life. But diversion must be provided, also, in wise measure, to give color and flavor to its ordinary experiences; and the home of the clergyman is the last home in the parish which ought to be the abode of dullness and gloom. Yet, whatever pains may be expended in wise training, the world will continue to ring the charge of perverseness and all manner of atrocities against parsonage children. We who are versed in such matters could tell Madam Grundy that while there may be an apparent truth in her accusation, it is yet, in its essence, a gross slander. Did these people, so readily believing ill, ever notice the bareheaded, barefooted children who are out-of-doors with impunity in all sorts of weather? Did they ever contrast them with other children, with whom any such experiment would be followed by chills and fever, if not by fatal disease? But why cannot the one set of children be hardened as well as the other? Because they are of a very different organization. In this answer we find the key to many of those parsonage misdemeanors which are trumpeted so far and wide.

It is frankly conceded that, as a general thing, ministers' children do not belong to that immaculate set who never tear their clothes, never crack the crockery, and never break their bones; who will sit primly in straight-backed chairs, hour after hour, with hands folded and feet dangling, and without so much as presuming to wink. I remember the indignant look which flushed the face of a young minister's wife, when a row of these same impeccables was pointed out to her high-flying little girls as a gracious model.

"*They* never want to leap downstairs, climb trees, walk fences, jump over stones, roll in the grass, and wade barefooted through brooks as yours do — not they, indeed!"

And why don't they, good sir? Why is it that little Maggie, who can hardly tottle alone, must seize on mamma's absence to tip over the slop-pail, and go to scrubbing up the floor with papa's freshly ironed shirt? What makes Willie upset the inkstand on the best table-cloth, spoiling a book of fine Paris engravings? And while the discomfited little mother is changing Eddie's dripping trousers, in which he has been foraging after pond lilies, why does that witch of a Nannie steal off so shyly? — why but to slip into the study, and with her chubby fingers execute remarkable hieroglyphics all over papa's just finished grand election sermon.

Why is all this, but that they are alive, wide-awake children, with not a drop of stagnant blood in their veins? Nor is this strange. Think of the father with his long student-life and perpetual brain-work. Think of the mother with a constant tax on her wits and strain on her nerves to keep the pot boiling, while she looks after father and children, the home, and the flock!

Do you wonder that the children of such parents inherit active brains? — that they are often brimful of restlessness, fun, and mischief?

Sometimes, from the feeling, perhaps, that these little ones are so many tiny candles set on a hill, in the face of all the congregation, the parental reins may be held a trifle tight, leading to restive jerks and leaps as opportunity offers. Head, heart, hands, and feet are often taxed to the utmost in controlling the animal spirits of these children, and in quelling those hot-headed impulses which drive them in every direction but the right one.

Yet be not disheartened, anxious mother. Take home one consolation — your darlings will never die of laziness. Restrain them wisely, but, by all means, do not govern them too much. And be assured, that, when they have outgrown their days of mischief, with the blessing of the good Lord, you will have something out of them for which you may well be thankful.

IV

UNREASONABLE DEMANDS

THAT human nature is human nature all the world over is a self-evident truth; and that human nature is not angelic nature is no less plain. Whatever pretensions it set forth, and whatever unctuous lips may laud it, it will, when closely scrutinized, exhibit the same unchanging characteristics — weakness, fallibility, perverseness.

To expect absolute perfection, therefore, is simply to expect the impossible. Why, then, is it looked for in a minister's wife? Is she not included in the race? Does she not belong to mankind?

It may do as a matter of poetry and gallantry to explain "the weaker vessel" as meaning that she is made of finer material. But when we come to the prose, the real gist of the question, it is another thing. Even if we could be oblivious of the Sacred Record, man's frequent and pointed allusions would preclude ignorance of the fact that the tempter

> "Into fraud
> Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
> Of prohibition, root of all our woe."

Now, since the minister's wife is a lineal descendant from our great-grandmother, why is it that just here is expected the unattainable? Yet you are forced to the conclusion that there are those who believe that a veritable angel should be let down from paradise for the special purpose of officiating as madam of their parish.

A doctor's wife has no responsibility in respect to her husband's patients; a lawyer's wife has none in respect to her husband's clients. But the minister's wife is regarded as owing special and important duties to all and to each of her husband's parishioners. There are multitudes who consider themselves entitled to find in this piece of humanity a combination of all the virtues in the calendar. With vigor of body and mind, and with soundness of head and heart, she must possess unfaltering courage, unexampled humility, untiring patience, unswerving fidelity, unflagging zeal, unfailing prudence, and unexhausted and inexhaustible sweetness of temper. She must be at once a model of liberality and a model of frugality. She must be endowed with that tact which never gives offense, and with that *faculty*—the Yankee term for *savoir faire*—which can make a great deal out of little and much out of nothing, and which no kind or amount of difficulties can possibly baffle.

She must be an accomplished lady, always on hand for parlor company, and an efficient drudge, always on hand for kitchen operations. She and her household must always be clad in fine scarlet,—never too fine, or woe betide her,—though to accomplish this she is not unfrequently obliged to resort to a brain full of contrivance and a purse full of emptiness.

She may be young and inexperienced; but for all that she must preside in the prayer-meetings, in the sewing circles, and in all the benevolent associations. She may have a flock of little ones to tie her at home, yet she must always be visiting the sick, and always looking after the well. She may be the teacher of her children, besides making and mending every one of their garments, yet she must hospitably entertain all the angels, alias agents, who may travel that way, and whom the doctors, the "squires," and the brethren in general do not find it quite convenient to accommodate. She must do this, too, without running a farthing into debt. With general courtesy to all, she may yet desire to be on terms of more intimate acquaintance with two or three families. But this must not be thought of for a single moment; for it would never do for the minister's wife to prefer one before another.

She must fill up all the shortcomings of her husband, atone for all his offenses, and be the scape-goat for the greater part of his blunders. In brief, she must do everything in the right place, at the right time, and in the right mannner. And if there be any excellence I have failed to enumerate, that excellence she must by no means fail to possess. Moreover, her children must be little specimens of the same immaculate character, perfect patterns of childish propriety, walking miniatures of herself. In fact, they too must be let down from paradise, as a special example to the parish juveniles.

The following advertisement is a poetic summary of what is often looked for:

"Wanted — a perfect lady,
  Delicate, gentle, refined,
With every beauty of person,
  And every endowment of mind;
Fitted by early culture
  To move in fashionable life,
And shine a gem in the parlor:
  Wanted — a minister's wife!

"Wanted — a thorough-bred worker,
  Who well to her household looks —
Shall we see our money wasted
  By extravagant Irish cooks?
Who cuts the daily expenses
  With economy sharp as a knife,
And washes and scrubs in the kitchen:
  Wanted — a minister's wife!

"A 'very domestic person';
  To callers she must not be out —
It has such a bad appearance
  For her to be gadding about;
Only to visit the parish
  Every year of her life,
And attend the funerals and weddings:
  Wanted — a minister's wife."

Consider the mountain-weight of responsibility which these requisitions throw upon the minister! He may meet with one whose beauty and grace strike his fancy, and whose modest virtues are fitted to win his heart. But he must not fall in love like other men. Before the smallest ripple of affection is suffered to agitate his being, he must ascertain whether she would prove an efficient manager of a Dorcas society. He should not seek a wife to sympathize in his tastes and charm his weary hours, but one who can preside with equanimity in a social meeting. It might shorten his trial were the lady elect, before he is fully committed to her, to spend a month on probation among his people.

A minister's wife, in one of our country parishes, took the liberty to wear some of the female vanities of the day. "The gossip-pot seethed and bubbled with this for a few months, and finally boiled over. One of the deacons 'felt it to be his duty' to call upon the pastor, and explain the great and general feeling of disapproval which existed of the good wife's dress and ways; and having the field clear, he spent a half-hour or so in details, winding up with the clincher, 'We don't like her, sir; in fact, we don't approve of her!' 'She suits me, sir,—good-morning,' was the mild and only reply; upon which, as upon an exploding torpedo, the caller left! This was a 'short answer,' which, if it did n't turn away 'wrath,' it did the deacon."

But it may be asked what claims the society has upon the minister's wife. That must depend upon the compact between her and them. What salary do they pay her? If they make a certain appropriation, with the understanding that they are to be requited by value received in her labors among them, she is under manifest obligation to meet this requisition. If they make no such appropriation, she is legally free from all responsibility.

Do you ask again what then does the minister's wife owe her husband's people? Most emphatically I answer, *nothing.* Legally, she is as free from all obligation to the society as if she lived in Beloochistan.

But there is a higher view. From sympathy with her husband in his ministerial work — the noblest ever given man to do — she owes his people any such labors as she can give consistently with those home duties which are always paramount. She owes them exactly what every other Christian woman in the parish owes them — the influence of her character and example, in favor of all that is noble and good and true.

But whatever services she may render, either directly or indirectly, they are not to be regarded as in the least degree professional or official services. Her influence differs from that of any other woman only as it is more broadly extended. Brought into frequent contact with all grades of society, her lines of influence are indefinitely multiplied, and all the womanly excellence wrought into her life may thus be more widely mirrored forth. The beautiful example, as a wife and mother, which we so admire in Victoria, derives its peculiar potency, not from her being queen, but from the fact that, *as* queen, the luster of her character in these private relations shines forth upon the whole world.

But some one will urge that the minister's position certainly involves his wife in social relations and duties more numerous and onerous than those of ordinary women. The millionaire, the leader of fashion, the successful politician who becomes an office-holder, the famous artist or litterateur, every man who occupies a prominent social position, may be said to involve his wife in social relations numerous and onerous. The difference between these wives and the minister's wife is, that of the first society makes requests, and they grant favors; of the second society makes demands, and she feels obligated to perform duties. It is because she fears to assert herself, lest she may injure her husband's influence.

Some pertinent extracts follow, from an article entitled "Common Sense for Ministers' Wives":

"How startled was I when all my two hundred and fifty most intimate friends, and their fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, and cousins to the fifth degree, opened on me with the question, 'How shall you like being a minister's wife?'

"Is it strange that I began to wonder that I had never before known how different a minister's wife must be from other women? Born and brought up in a lawyer's home, having no theological relatives, I had never been behind the scenes, and Mrs. A——, Mrs. B——, and Mrs. C——, the wives of my various pastors, had always seemed to me made of ordinary flesh and bones. . . .

"Like every other person, the minister's wife has her home duties and her outside duties. Of these, the home duties should first be discharged, and one of the most imperative is to *keep sacred the household privacy.*

"If there are two books anywhere that have the power to make me boil over with indignation, 'Sunnyside' and 'Shadyside' are two such. As a child I wept over them both, and even now I cannot but love and admire the Sunnyside wife. But how large a part of the sorrows endured in those parsonages was due to the simple fact that the ministers' families allowed themselves to be considered public property!

"Affirming that the pastor's wife should boldly and persistently claim all the privileges of home sanctity and secrecy, keeping her doors barred and bolted against every intrusion with just as free a conscience as any other refined woman, I lay down the general principle that duties are determined by opportunities; the greater a person's opportunities, the larger the responsibility and more numerous the duties involved.

"This principle is binding on a minister's wife just as much as, and no more than, on any other Christian woman. What her opportunities are must be decided by herself, and not by her congregation, who will have enough to do in deciding upon their own."

V

A WORD WITH MRS. GRUNDY

A GENERAL association was once formed in London for the suppression of vice. A humorous clergyman present, who had probably been annoyed by meddlesome parishioners, suggested the importance of a society for the suppression of *ad*-vice.

No Protestant would avowedly dispute every man's right to act according to his own conscience. Yet there prevails a kind of Popish interference entirely at variance with this right. Somebody is always setting up a standard for somebody else, or attempting to square another's conduct according to his own notions.

"We ought to draw some line of distinction between the church and the world," remarks Mrs. A, "and that line I make artificial flowers."

So, with zeal worthy of a better cause, she labors to bring her neighbors to her stand-point; and by and by we have a clique who pronounce the wearing of flowers inconsistent with the religious profession. To all intents and purposes they constitute themselves an Anti-Artificial Flowers Association, distributing their sermons and their censures *ad libitum.*

Some make curling or crimping the hair the point of departure from spirituality; others fix upon gay ribbons and feathers, and others still upon frills and flounces. Some go out on a crusade against one form of amusement and some against another, directing their linguistic batteries each against his own point of attack.

Thus standards are set up as a code of morals, and a rule of Christian life, which are purely arbitrary. If you, my good friend, have a warrant for denouncing curls, why have not I an equal one for denouncing braids? If you feel bound to make war upon chess, why should you complain if I make war upon checkers?

There always have been differences of opinion on ethical as well as on political and theological subjects, and so long as human nature remains unchanged, these differences will continue. Paul insists on rights of conscience, and sternly rebukes the censorious intermeddler. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." The Church is founded on a common faith, a common love, and not on cases of conscience. Broad general principles are laid down in Scripture for our guidance, and every one should be allowed to make the application for himself. This man is given to reflection, that one to activity; one is of the ascetic and another of the epicurean school; one is a conservative and the other a radical. Where the Divine Word is explicit, all classes are equally bound; but where it leaves the decision to conscience, an ample margin should be allowed for diversity of opinion.

We are entitled to free discussion on any and all points, but we have no more right to lay down a specific regimen for our neighbor, and press it upon his observance, than he has to do this by us. A loving watchfulness is included in the idea of covenant, and is a high Christian duty. But such interference as I refer to is contrary alike to the spirit of Protestantism and to the genius of Christianity. Whatever you can properly do to increase the spirituality and stimulate the zeal of your Christian brother and sister, that it is well for you to do. But you have no more right to dictate how their hair shall be worn, in what amusements they are at liberty to indulge, and the number of meetings they ought to attend, than how many hours they should sleep, and at what time they should take their meals.

Your disposition, it may be, is a morose one; consequently, when you happen in the company of some brother who possesses a great flow of animal spirits, and who never appears without bringing rays of sunlight and breezes of merriment, you are inclined to discharge volleys of rebuke upon his head. Or, you are one of the irrepressibles, overflowing with fun, and are disposed to ridicule, if not censure, your graver brother. "Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

But many are not willing to leave things at such loose ends. They prefer to try every man on that Procrustean bed which seems destined never to wear out. Particularly are they given to stretching clergymen and their families upon it. He must not harbor any local attachment, for he is a clergyman; his only care must be for "being in general." He must not indulge in healthful amusement, for he is a clergyman, and his thoughts must be above the world.

"It is in the church," says Mr. Curtis, in "The Easy Chair," "that Mrs. Grundy nods supreme, and holds highest her virtuous hands of horror. She does not permit the clergyman to do what he thinks right and best, but insists upon what she thinks he ought to think right and best. The very person she has invited to take charge of her is the very one she will not suffer to do this, that, or the other. Why don't the ministers break Mrs. Grundy's head?"

A question easily asked, yet to do the deed would be very far from easy. When the lords of Vanity Fair break the head of fashionable Mrs. Grundy, then, and not before, the combined clergy may attempt the same with pious Mrs. Grundy. For the present there seems no escape from her arrogant comments and her intermeddling fingers.

"Don't you ever have any new dresses?" asks a parish juvenile of one of the parsonage children. "And, for pity's sake, why don't your mother get you a new hat, instead of letting you wear that shabby old thing that looks as if it came out of the ark?"

Miss Briggs, a seamstress, who has been working in the minister's family, is assailed by one of the flock:

"Do tell if Mr. Gilbert has to wait on his wife the whole time."

"On the contrary, it 's she that waits on him."

"So they 've got hold of the wrong one, and it 's *she* that 's the slave?"

"It 's nothing of the sort; she does it of her own free will."

"Their last girl, Debby Ann, let out a sight of strange things about the family."

"I suppose you took the liberty of catechizing her, did n't you?"

"Of course I did; I think we 've got a perfect right to know what 's going on in the minister's family."

Evidently many consider the pastor's wife as under their special watch and care. Some complain if she wears long dresses, and some if she wears short ones; some, if she wears a large bonnet; some, if she wears a small one; and some, if she wears neither, but, instead, a fashionable top-knot. Some take offense if she wears flounces, frilling, quilling, plaiting, or whatever happens to be the rage; and others, if she does not wear it. Thus she is equally liable to censure, whether she chances to be in or out of fashion.

A minister's wife who wore a flounced dress was visited one day by a couple of ladies, who protested against ministerial flounces. Quietly leaving the room, she presently returned with the dress, and handing each of them a pair of scissors, requested them to rip off the offending flounces, and then excused herself to finish her baking. When she returned the parlor was empty and the flounces untouched.

This story calls to mind that of the good woman who went to her bishop, and complained that his bands were too long. Giving her some scissors, he told her to cut them off to suit her own ideas. This she did, upon which he asked if, in return, he might cut off something *she* wore, which he considered too long. She could, of course, do nothing but assent, whereupon he took the scissors, saying to her, "Then, madam, hold out your tongue."

Some extend their supervision beyond the externals, one objecting to madam's reading in foreign tongues, and another to her reading a great deal in her own; one finding fault if she gives much time to music, and another if she gives much to drawing. And worse than this, if she should be guilty of writing anything for the press, it is whispered about the parish that her husband and children are grossly neglected, and going to destruction.

There are those who, from their actions, would seem to be lawfully constituted overseers of their pastor's family. It is a part of their daily business to furnish a bulletin of all that is going on within it. The bars which exclude the world from other homes are in this case broken down, or climbed over. The whole household is under espionage, its servants being suborned as reporters, and for other police duties, while even little children are put into the witness-box.

Thus a thorough inspection is secured, and by a system of questioning and cross-questioning every trifle is ferreted out, and hung up before Mrs. Grundy's face and eyes for her free comment: how the parson's wife spends her time; how the children behave; what the minister's salary was in his last settlement; what presents he used to receive, and whether he has any money laid up; what was the cost of baby's blanket; how madam came by such a handsome cloak; what they had for dinner yesterday; where in the world they got their piano, and whether the "help" sits at the first or second table.

The last point is one over which there have been some large as well as little battles. A faithful servant is no small item of family comfort. But this comfort is sometimes turned into an embarrassment and a vexation by parish interference. There are singular misconceptions of this whole subject. That there is such a thing as a subordinate relation in the family, in the school, and in government, nobody denies. But this does not necessarily imply inferiority. The minister is far from assuming that none of his people are as good as he, because of his occupancy of the chief seat in the synagogue. And if a boy fills the position of clerk, though he be the son of a millionaire, he is expected to discharge the duties of his situation, and in times and ways best suited to his master's convenience.

Just so in domestic service. A girl in that situation may be entirely respectable, may even be a fellow church-member; but does that make it unsuitable that she should eat at the second table? The question of superiority and inferiority has nothing to do with it. It is a matter of order, which every family, not excepting the minister's, should be allowed to arrange according to its own convenience. And there are often the pleasantest relations when there is some boundary-line in this intercourse. In the words of a popular writer: "There is much less danger of clashing when mistress and maid have their orbits on different planes. Duties are far more clearly defined, and relations far less complicated, and if the maid have ability, she will gradually assume an almost commanding position in the household. She will be less its servant than its friend, its care-taker, honored and prized beyond what money can express."

Why should others create disturbance in these relations by their unwise interference? For any such parish intermeddling I cannot find a shadow of justification. What would be impertinence toward a lawyer's household is equally so toward a minister's. He has the same right to judge for himself, and to act according to his own convictions, as every other man. He has, moreover, the right in common with all others, except criminals, to a home sanctuary. And if these busybodies in other men's matters will take the trouble to look into the dictionary, they will find that sanctuary means "a sacred asylum, a place of protection"; by which I understand protection not only against intruding feet, but against prying eyes and backbiting tongues.

But while a protest is thus made against encroachment on parsonage rights, no apology is offered for that spirit of domination which is sometimes seen in the minister toward his parish, or in the church to its particular members. Yet if the church insists on assuming this censorship, the question arises how far private tastes and judgments are to be governed by it. Or to be more specific, are we bound to give up amusements, that we consider unexceptionable, because some church member or members have entered their *caveat?*

As a question of mere abstract right, I should answer no. But the Law is one thing and the Gospel another. From that higher stand-point of a broad Christian philanthropy, the question assumes a different aspect. By a cheerful sacrifice of any innocent enjoyment or indulgence out of regard to a Christian brother or sister, we might often lose far less than we should gain. And the quality of the gain would be much more precious than that of the loss.

Yet we must not yield unwisely. Where we honestly believe that injury would result from the surrender of our judgment to that of others, it becomes a serious question whether we ought not to make a stand. We are bound to consider, not only weak brothers and sisters, but the many Christians who differ from them, and particularly those outsiders whom we would gladly attract, but whom we are in danger of repelling by unwarrantably multiplying the number of "Thou shalt nots."

To draw these outsiders within our sphere of influence, we should, in the spirit of the apostle, "become all things to all men, that by any means we might save some." To hold ourselves apart from worldly men for fear of evil influence is, as some one says, "as if the salt should stand aloof from the flesh, lest it should be corrupted; or as if the light should stand aloof from the darkness, lest it should be obscured."

It would sometimes seem a matter of doubt whether the minister is settled over the parish, or the parish over the minister. This is a point that ought to be definitely understood in the beginning. "I hear you are about to be settled over the people at Stonington," said a minister to a brother clergyman. "Yes," he replied; "if I am settled there, I shall be settled *over* and not under them."

It is related of Rev. John Hancock, of Lexington, Mass., that when quite advanced, his two deacons, after consultation with the church-members, decided that it was desirable to put some check upon their minister. So they called at his house, and proposed that ruling elders should be appointed to divide his cares with him. He meekly assented to their proposition, thanking them for their consideration, and expressing the hope that they themselves might be the ones chosen to this work.

Encouraged by his pliability, they told him that he, as a learned man, was the most competent person to decide on the duties of the elders.

"Yes," he replied; "I have studied ecclesiastical history a great deal, and I think I know just what such elders ought to do. I should like to have one of them come up to my house before meeting on Sunday, and get my horse out of the barn, and saddle him, and bring him up to the door, and hold the stirrup while I get on. The other may wait at the church door, and hold him while I get off; then after meeting he may bring him up to the steps."

Some parishioners seem to regard themselves as having a kind of right over their minister, as voters over the representative. One pastor is dismissed, because in theological opinions he is "Old School," and another because he is "New School"; one because he is a Republican, and another because he is a Democrat; one because, though an earnest man of God, he differs from some of his people as to the best means of promoting temperance, and another because he does not agree with all his people on the difficult subject of amusements.

"I have nothing against Mr. A," says a church-member, "but I don't relish his extempore preaching. I do wish he would study more, for I like to be fed when I go to church."

"Why can't Mr. B dispense with his written sermons, and trust to the inspiration of the moment? I am tired of those everlasting 'notes.'"

"I wish Mr. C was a smarter man. He is not up to this place and never will be, and his removal is simply a question of time."

"If Mr. D were only a pastor, we might get along; but his calls are like angels' visits, few and far between."

"Mr. E's sermons are getting altogether too doctrinal, and no church can flourish on such preaching."

"Mr. F goes off into all the topics of the day. For my part, I think a minister ought to confine himself mostly to doctrinal preaching."

"Of late, Mr. G gives us nothing but expository sermons, and he is emptying the church. How I long for something spiritual!"

Is not this a fair specimen of the criticism that goes on in many of our churches? It is spoken thoughtlessly, without doubt, but the mischief is all the same.

And what is the minister to do? For kind, judicious suggestions he is always grateful, and a general spontaneous impression will have great weight with him. But who knows so well as he what his people need, and how to give each his portion in due season? And when he has prayerfully decided what is best for them, shall he veer at every breath like the vane on his steeple? Is the shepherd to be led by his flock, or is he to lead them? Indeed, was it not precisely to be their leader that he was ordained over them?

But many a parishioner forgets this, and, instead of a broad consideration for the whole church, sets up his own individual feeling and judgment as the standard of his duty. It is this narrow view that often leads to criticisms like those given, and which have the effect to loosen the minister's hold upon his church. Says one: "If you cannot conscientiously class your pastor, as you ought, among your dearest personal friends, to stab whose reputation would be to wound yourself, then class him among your enemies, and fulfill the Lord's command to pray for him."

VI

PARISH COURTESIES

NOTWITHSTANDING all that is said respecting the lack of comforts in many a parsonage, in the majority of parishes there are considerate persons who have the welfare and enjoyment of their minister's family very much at heart. Nor are these by any means exclusively among the richer members; for numberless little kindnesses are rendered with scarcely any expense or labor except that of thought.

In the spring a bunch of crocuses, trailing arbutus, or violets often finds its bright and perfumed way into the parsonage. Later, June roses follow in the same direction, and by and by the brilliant autumn flowers — all on the same pleasant errand.

In the strawberry, raspberry, peach, and plum season, the little folks clap their hands over the fragrant baskets that come knocking at the parsonage door; and you may be sure that many a minister's family has a share in the golden harvests, to say nothing of the big Thanksgiving turkeys and the delicious pies that make a sly entrance under their roof.

At Christmas, too, that day of gifts, there are parish trees bearing among them twelve manners of fruit for the gladdening of the parsonage; while the fleece of some fat member of the flock is worked into a coat or cloak for the faithful shepherd.

Ah, yes! many are the ways in which the comfort and cheer of good carnal things are brought to him who is freely giving out his spiritual things. Thoughtful parishioners there are, who not unfrequently remember him and his family in their walks and rides and sails, and in their little summer excursions. Some think of their pastor when planning who shall attend the annual meetings of the American Board, general associations, conventions, or other church gatherings; some, when they are subscribing for magazines and reviews; while now and then we hear of a small legacy left his pastor by some considerate member of the parish. Indeed, in great and small ways too numerous to mention, there are some who never forget their minister. Verily, they shall not lose their reward.

In a social gathering in one of our cities, a gentleman remarked, "We laymen lose a great deal, probably more than we know, in not treating our ministers as they ought to be treated." He illustrated this admission by a story concerning one John Scott of Delaware, who planted on a certain year a hundred acres of corn. It was a dry season, and no rain fell. In the midst of the drought, however, there came a shower just large enough to water this man's hundred acres. His neighbors failed to catch any of the precious drops, and lost their corn. But they found a solution for the seeming enigma of John Scott's singular good fortune in the fact that he was in the habit of feeding the minister's horses. "And if such a blessing follows feeding ministers' *horses*," infers the layman, "what must come from feeding ministers themselves? The more we give, the more will come back to us."

This is introduced as a good story. But while we must have entire faith in the Scripture doctrine, "Give and it shall be given you," we are not obliged to accept the conclusion that John Scott caught all the precious drops because he alone had cared for the minister's horses.

At funerals, in some places, it is customary to present the minister with a pair of black kid gloves, while his attentions to the departed in their sickness are often generously remembered. Sometimes he receives a more substantial recognition of his services. A clergyman of nearly half a century's experience writes that "he knows both the shady and the sunny side of the question about compensation." From some wealthy families, for whom he has performed most service, and at most expenditure in this line, he has received no token of acknowledgment and appreciation beyond an easy "Thanks," and maybe a pair of gloves; but by others he has been treated very generously, and even munificently, having received ten, twenty, and at two different times a hundred dollars each for his services at funerals.

A pleasant instance has come to my knowledge, of a pastor who received a hundred-dollar bill from a lady, not of his society, as an expression of her warm appreciation of his kindness to her relative, his late parishioner. This act was, doubtless, no less grateful to the giver than to the receiver.

The question of funeral fees has been debated in the public prints, and many pros and cons have been summoned. Most ministers would, doubtless, object to a prescribed fee, and there are few who would not decline to take anything from those of limited means. But why should not wealthy people be allowed to make some suitable acknowledgment of these last services rendered to their dear ones, not only as a tribute to the departed, but as a gratification to their own feelings? Such acknowledgments being honorable to the giver, and in no way a discredit to the receiver, would it not seem ungracious to decline them?

No one, certainly, will question the propriety of remembering the minister at funerals to such a degree, at least, as shall save him from tramping two or three miles on foot in the heat of summer or the cold of winter to perform such a service, and possibly to the permanent injury of his health, as has happened in some cases within my knowledge.

Another way in which the minister is not unfrequently remembered to his particular advantage is in the wedding-fees. Yet these are sometimes grudgingly doled out.

"What's the damage, dominie?" asked a delving Dutchman of the minister who had just officiated at his marriage. "I can tell that better, sir, a year hence."

"What do you charge?" said a young man to the clergyman who had just tied the hymeneal knot for him. "I make no charge, sir; you can give what you please." Handing a dollar-bill, the man inquired, "Will that do?" "Yes; but I hope your wife will prove worth more than a dollar."

As an offset to these anecdotes may be told that of a minister who received from a wealthy bridegroom a pair of silk gloves as his only fee. Somewhat chagrined, he threw them, a little indignantly, into a drawer. Several weeks after, when seeking for some gloves in haste, he came across this pair, and, putting them on, found a ten-dollar bill in every finger and thumb.

The question may be raised whether the acceptance by ministers of such gifts and courtesies as were alluded to in the early part of this chapter is in any wise improper. But this inquiry involves others. What is their object? Are they rendered grudgingly from a sort of compulsion? Are they offered in the way of patronage? In either case, if that is understood, they cannot be acceptable, and ought not to be accepted. But so far as they are a natural outflow of affection and respect, why should the minister have scruples in receiving them?

There is an aspect of the question, however, that has a much deeper significance, involving, as it does, the character of the relation which the minister sustains to his people. If this relation were essentially the same as that of other men to their employers, then it might not improperly be felt that the defraying his expenses to the assembly, or conference, or convention, or synod; the sending him to Saratoga, or to Palestine, and the bestowing gifts, common or costly, upon him and his family, are all entirely uncalled for, if not intrusive.

But is not the ministerial relation *sui generis?* Other professional men choose their own residence. And they do this, almost without exception, with sole reference to their business prospects, while every plan and proceeding bears toward the great end—success. And by success is meant large emoluments.

The minister, on the other hand, if true to his vocation, goes, not where he can make the most money, but where he can do the most good. He is a laborer under the Divine Husbandman, and his work is to sow seed, the harvest whereof cannot be measured in bushels and pecks, or its value reckoned in dollars and cents.

It is this view of his work that makes the minister slow to talk much about his remuneration, however inadequate it may be. If he has not this view, if his aim is like that of other professional men, he has sadly mistaken his calling, and the sooner he leaves it, the better.

The builder and the mason, the painter and the day-laborer, do their work and receive their pay. That is all there is of it. Nothing depends on social sympathy or affinities of any kind. The lawyer has certain intellectual relations with his clients, but they are not of a sort that cash payments cannot square.

Between the teacher and his pupils, and the doctor and his patients, a degree of sympathy is important to the highest success. And while in these professions moral influence is not necessarily involved, such an influence is often exerted. In proportion as this is the case does the tie become a close one, while some recognition of the kindly interest manifested on the one hand becomes a sort of necessity on the other.

But in the minister's relations to his people there are certain social and moral elements which belong to no other profession. By virtue of their call, and his settlement over them, he becomes their pastor, the spiritual shepherd of this flock. It is his aim to root out all evil growths, to purify the heart, and, by bringing the human will into harmony with the Divine, to elevate and ennoble the whole being. In one word, it is his office to guide men to heaven.

Now, how can this spiritual service be computed in dollars and cents? "Not *yours*, but you." Yet it is ordained that the minister shall live of the Gospel. Inasmuch as he is a mortal man and must eat, drink, and be clothed, like other men, this spiritual relation must have a common-sense business basis, including stipends. But although these money transactions may square the business accounts, they can no more represent the value of the pastor's work, or his peculiar relation to his flock, than the cash paid for gas or kerosene could represent the beauty of a poem of Longfellow or of Whittier which has been written by its light.

The pastoral relation is in some sense entirely outside of all metes and bounds. It is based on affinities, on sympathies, on a kind of magnetism. What can be more in harmony with this than those nameless attentions, those unpriced gifts, which spring from an affectionate people? I do not here allude to so-called "donations," made to supplement an insufficient salary, for all these sink to mere business transactions, and are not always the most agreeable ones at that. I refer entirely to a different class of gifts. To have any other than the barest mercantile value, it is essential that these gifts should be voluntary. The moment they are claimed on one side or on the other, yielded reluctantly to some unwise though well-meaning solicitor, their charm is gone. People should learn that there is an "eternal distinction between a tax wrung, a subscription badgered, a compromise effected, and the spontaneous offering of affection."

"The ideal gift," says one, "is the blossoming of assured love, or the timid outbreaking of a love that craves assurance. It is the giver who is uncertain, who is obliged. It is the receiver who confers obligation and approved affection." In the case I am considering, these spontaneous expressions of the love of his flock are the fragrant aroma exhaled from the ripening fruit of the pastor's husbandry, the fair crystallization of his labors. As such, whatever be the intrinsic value of the gift, whether it be a tapestry carpet or a linen curtain, a gold watch or a glass inkstand, a barrel of sugar or a bunch of violets, it has a value to the pastor entirely independent of the trade-mark.

When these expressions are true exponents of the relation, they indicate, in their practical influence, the most favorable conditions of success in the pastor's great object, the spiritual elevation and culture of his people. As denoting sympathy with his work, as proofs of their appreciation, and often of their progress, these tokens come to him as a precious reward and encouragement, thus serving as a bond of union between him and them. Their grateful love to Christ, whose representative he is, often seeks in this way to find tangible expression. Their gifts, in no insignificant sense, are rendered to the Saviour, and as such, why should they not be accepted in the same spirit.

Whether they ought to be translated into cash, and bruited in the newspapers is another question. If the donors desire such publicity, do they not indicate that it is a tribute to themselves which they seek? If so, as to any delicate sentiment their gift should represent, with their own hand they stamp it as worthless.

A pastor in a discourse to his people, from whom he had received many tokens of affection and respect, says to them: "You have never advertised your kindnesses in the newspapers, nor have I, as the manner of some is. I have sometimes thought that in this day, when so many ministers and churches seem fond of parading their private relations and transactions in the columns of the public journals, there might be some of you who would wonder why the general public was not kept informed of what this church did for its pastor. Let me say, once for all, that the world has been kept in ignorance of many things very precious to you and me; first, because I doubted whether it would greatly interest the world, while it might provoke some less favored brother to envy, without provoking his people to similar kindnesses; and, again, because I shrank from advertising myself into notoriety; but chiefly, because it seems to me a most ungracious thing for a minister to make public proclamation that his people have done him a kindness, as if it were a thing they were quite unused to doing. It is too cheap a return,—this newspaper gratitude costing some shilling a line,—far too cheap a return for the gifts of a tender and thoughtful love, the only gifts from people to pastor whose giving is not an impertinence, and whose acceptance is not a humiliation."

In a similar strain another writes: "It is the gift made under the compulsion of custom, the debt which is labeled donation, that we need to get rid of. But distant be the day that shall see parishioners hesitate to put into the parsonage larder, or library, or pocket-book, the gifts prompted by a loving personal regard. If there were more demonstrativeness of this sort, ministers would not get the blues as often as they do, for fear that they are losing their hold on their people, and parishioners would find themselves listening with increased profit to the sermons."

But there are courtesies of another kind which cheer the heart of every earnest pastor — courtesies that cost but little, but are worth to him far more than any gifts you could bestow. A sympathetic recognition of the value of his services, the taking of a little pains to show him that you "esteem him very highly for his work's sake," will help him a great deal more than anything else you can do for him. It may be that you are reserved and undemonstrative, and so you never tell him of the good his preaching is doing you. He gives you his best, but from you not a single word of appreciation or of interest does he get. He comes down from the pulpit and exchanges greetings; you speak to him of the weather — how cold or how hot it is; you inquire if he has escaped the prevailing epidemic; you tell him that Mrs. Green's little girl has the measles. But it never enters your head or your heart to allude to his sermon. As to all that with which his soul is filled there is nothing from you but the emptiness of utter silence. So far as the evidence goes, not a chord has been touched, not a response awakened. Is it strange that he walks home with a saddened face and a heavy heart? that he fears lest the sermon over which he had labored and prayed so earnestly has proved a failure?

But he preaches the same discourse away from home. Somehow the church is pervaded by a different atmosphere, and this affects him like a breath from the mountains. The frigid non-conductor which had intervened between himself and his former hearers is melted away, and he stands up a live, free man. If he has one particle of magnetism about him it is brought into full play, and he goes straight to the heart and the conscience.

When the services are ended, some of the brethren hasten to meet him at the pulpit stairs and thank him for his words of truth. As he goes down the aisle, one good woman and another take his hand and continue to let him know that they have been instructed and comforted. Thus his heart is cheered and strengthened.

In another congregation he meets, from beginning to end, with a very different reception. I have in mind a young clergyman who related to me his own experience. He arrived at a certain rural town Saturday night, and, according to directions, went to the country tavern, where he found smoking and drinking going on. He was left entirely to himself, except that, during the evening, some one called for the hymns. The Sabbath dawned upon him, a stranger in a strange land; and a stranger he remained through all its hours. The first bell rang; then the second. As no one called for him, he inquired the way to the church and went there alone. He tried to put his heart into his discourse, but he felt as if preaching to stone walls. After service he was requested to stop at the Sunday-school and make a few remarks, which he did, and then went his solitary way back to the tavern.

The afternoon was a repetition of the morning, only still drearier. Had he been an agent to sell washing-machines or carpet-sweepers, he would have met with some response; as it was, though the minister's wife and probably some of the deacons were present, no one accosted him, except a man who walked a little ways with him to put into his hand his hard-earned honorarium. But so far as any invitation to dinner or to tea was concerned, he might as well have been in Kamtschatka.

The trials of that day, however, bore good fruits. He was led by them so to train his own people that they never failed to extend courtesy and hospitality to any strange minister who might occupy his pulpit.

As has been intimated, there are congregations greatly at fault in this particular — congregations which never manifest to the preacher the smallest interest in what they have heard. Now it may be that your silence is not that of indifference, but of thoughtlessness or of habit. Can you not break the spell? If there is interest in your heart, why not let it be upon your lips also? It is not flattery that I plead for. That miserable incense, so often offered at the shrine of our popularity-loving clergymen, is only harmful in its influence, ministering to vanity and worldly ambition. Its tendency is to set up self in the pulpit in place of the Saviour. As one remarked of a famous minister who had not passed through this siege of adulation unscathed, "Instead of preaching Christ and Him crucified, he preaches Puffer and him glorified." From all such carnal ministrations one cannot keep himself too free.

But in showing a just appreciation of your pastor's services in letting him know that you have a warm sympathy with him in all his efforts, you will do good to him and to yourselves also; you will bathe his soul in a sweet moral sunshine, which, by reflex influence, shall flood your own souls likewise. And in the warmth of that sunshine shall spring forth fragrant flowers and golden fruit which shall bless abundantly the parsonage and the parish.

V

THE PASTOR AT WORK

I

STUDY AND PULPIT

THE phrase, "the pastor in the study," implies that he is a student; and the phrase, "in the pulpit," implies that he is a teacher. What, then, is the relation of the people to the pastor as a student and a teacher?

I assume that he is worthy of these high designations; that he has been trained to and observes the habits of a student; and that he stands in his pulpit as a teacher. If he is unworthy of these titles through lack of training or mental capacity, or if he forfeits them by indolence or misconception, there are no relations between the people and himself such as are here considered. In such a case, the sooner the formal relations are dissolved the better; for a pastor who is not both a student and a teacher has no claim upon his office and its emoluments. He need not be a learned man, but he must study; he need not be a great teacher, but he must teach. Presupposing all this, how can the people help him in these relations?

First. Assuming also that he cannot continuously teach well unless he studies well, the very first thing to be considered by the people is, that he shall have *time* for study. Rid yourselves utterly of the idea that the pastor may not be about his work when he is not engaged in its visibly active forms. It is sometimes thought that if he is not preaching, or making pastoral visits, or presiding over meetings, or attending to the details of parish business, he is not at work; but these occupations ought to consume but a small part of his time. The demands of the pulpit to-day are so great and strenuous that unless the pastor devotes the greater part of his time to study, he will fall below your standard of requirement and expectation, and he will also fail of continued usefulness. You may say what you will about simple Gospel preaching and extempore speaking, and the like, but you will not, in the long run, care for the preaching unless there is behind and under it the solid study and careful meditation of the student. Now, the first and main thing is to secure for your teacher a proper amount of uninterrupted time. Most pastors study in the morning. When young they often study in the evening, but commonly rue it, and, as they grow older, fix on the morning hours, when the brain is clearer, more trustworthy, and less prone to morbid and exaggerated thought. It should be a law in the parish that the pastor shall not be interrupted during the first half of the day. If you occasionally see him on the street during these hours, do not infer that you may seek him in his study at such times; he probably has some better reason for being there than you have for being in his house. Extreme occasions aside, the people should rigorously abstain from intruding on their pastor during his known hours of study. "A moment for just one question" at eleven o'clock may prove more disastrous to his sermon than two hours of questions in the afternoon.

Speaking generally, learn the habits of your pastor as to study, and shape your action accordingly.

Second. Fewer sermons should be required than is now the custom. This does not imply less time to be spent in the study, nor less teaching in the pulpit, nor less of the student habit and feeling, but rather more in each respect. Professionally, pastors are weighed down and humbled by a consciousness of the poor work they render in their pulpits from Sunday to Sunday. The eagerness with which they listen to, and often seek for, approval and praise of their preaching is largely due to the fact that they know that the sermons are not what they ought to be. A man who has done a thoroughly good piece of work, and knows it to be such, is not anxious about its reception, so far as its merit is concerned. The effort and strain the pastor is under, to get in readiness two sermons each week, is well-nigh fatal to all good habits as a student. He writes hastily; he does not pause to think out his thought and consider its relations, to verify and amplify his knowledge, to perfect the form, to condense or enlarge according to the need. Beginning his professional life thus, and without material to fall back upon, he early contracts bad habits as a student that become fixed, and follow him all through, and sink him below his real place and desert as a thinker. It is a constant surprise in the pews that pastors of evident intellectual ability preach so poorly. The greater part sink far below their proper intellectual standard the moment they begin the sermon; they show neither the mental grasp, nor the intelligence, the culture, the wisdom, the knowledge of men and of the world that they show in private conversation and on the street. It is not because they are indolent, but because they are the helpless slaves of bad habits of thought and study that were formed early in their ministry—habits almost necessarily formed by the demand for two sermons each week. If there is poor preaching,—and it must be confessed that there is a great deal,—the people are largely responsible for it; they have trained the preacher away from all ability to preach well by their excessive requirements. The common faults of preaching indicate that they spring from such a cause; formal, slip-shod in thought, doubtful in exegesis, one-sided or so guarded as to be without much meaning, dry, over-speculative, or over-hortatory, or sentimental, according to the direction in which the preacher's mind works most easily; in a word, unvitalized and unindividualized, because the man has no life and individuality left to throw into it. All his energies go week after week into getting something ready that will "answer"; and he has done this so long that he cannot do otherwise.

The inference from this prescribes an important duty on the part of the people to the pastor; namely, require fewer sermons—giving him to understand, however, that there is to be no less study, and that greater excellence is expected.

Every sermon should be a fresh and vital creation, else it is not worth preaching. Unless a preacher can get a subject into a light that is new and real to himself, he cannot preach well upon it. That any man can do this even once a week is impossible, except in rare cases; but when he has produced a true sermon, you will want to hear it again and again, as with a poem or a song.

Third. Protect your teacher from all needless causes of worry, not because he is too good, or too sensitive to suffer in this way, but because you want to get the best work out of him that is possible.

There is nothing so antagonistic to the student habit as small, fretting anxieties. Working alone, given to meditation, sustaining a relation in which good-will is a prime necessity, closely bound to people from whom he is at the same time shut off in many ways, the pastor is peculiarly tempted to indulge in suspicions, and is sorely hindered by needless criticism and slight troubles. There is enough of this in nearly all parishes to render the pastor miserable if it comes to his knowledge. Therefore it should be kept from him so far as possible; or, at least, not be brought to him.

Thought flourishes only in a calm atmosphere. The mind may thrive and grow strong under great trials, for they bring their own hours of after-peace with them, but anxieties only throw it out of working-gear. Besides, a pastor should be kept as free as possible from all causes which tend to embitter him, and which lead him to regard men contemptuously. He cannot teach well those whom he cannot regard with respect. If there are any persons in the parish who do *not* help the pastor as a student, it is those who feel bound to report to him "the state of feeling" adverse to him; it is time for this when it is time to resign. There will, indeed, be vexing questions and bad states of feeling which the pastor must know about and compose if possible, but his friends and advisers should, in this case at least, observe times and seasons. Do not take them to him on Sunday, neither on Monday, nor on Saturday, nor in the evening or the morning of any day. Are there not four afternoons left that are sufficient unto the evil of the whole week?

Generalizing upon these points, I would say that if you would help your pastor as a student and teacher, you must strive to secure for him all those conditions which will best enable him to fill out this relation. His work as a preacher is one of routine, and the enemies that most threaten it are dullness and fatigue, a tired brain and a lowered vitality. When he thus enters the pulpit, the sermon will be dull by natural consequence, and his weariness will impart itself to the congregation. The preacher should go into the pulpit as a race-horse bounds into the course, full of life and fire, eager for the work before him. And he must be prepared for it somewhat as the race-horse is, by considerate care between times. Secure for him an entirely free Monday; give him wide liberty in recreation; attend yourselves to all details of parish work of which he can reasonably be relieved. If you are able, provide him with a paid assistant who shall also superintend the Sunday-school; encourage him in a social and intellectual life that is apart from the parish, on the ground that he needs change of thought and atmosphere; do not vex him with the small discontents that float through the congregation, thistle-down of criticism that will find its way out as it came in if let alone; keep him in the circle of the brightest, the most encouraging and stimulating part of his field—not, indeed, away from its suffering and misery and sin, but from those negative and disheartening conceptions of himself and of his office the knowledge of which can be of no value to him. Protect him, also, against the conception that he is *hired to preach*, and is in that light accountable to each and every member of the congregation. There is, indeed, a business relation not to be forgotten, but it is best observed on either side when it is most kept out of sight.

When these things are done, not merely out of tender regard and consideration, but to secure good results, then you may press your demands for good preaching with strenuous and imperative emphasis.

Fourth. There is another feature of your relation to the pastor as a teacher more difficult of adjustment in these days; namely, the degree of liberty and range of thought and speculation in the pulpit that shall be accorded to him.

That there are certain vague yet real limits set about a teacher in the pulpit, known as *orthodoxy*, will not be denied. That a pastor who is worthy of the name will observe these limits, and that the congregation may insist on such observance, is equally undeniable. Connected with these admissions, however, are the equally evident principles that the preacher must be honest, true to the truth as he finds it, and unhesitating in his utterance of it. The people should not only accord to him such liberty, but insist upon it in their own interest; for freedom in the pulpit is quite as essential to the hearers as to the preacher. It is sometimes regarded as a sort of luxury and accorded privilege or indulgence on the part of the people, whereas it is they and not the pastor who most need it. If there is anything that is deadening and fatal to the spiritual life of both parties, it is a formal orthodoxy, uttered by a preacher who only half believes, or believes it with large reservation, and is heard by a congregation who knows, or feels, or suspects that such is the case.

Now, what are the rights of the preacher and what are the rights of the people under this twofold condition; namely, limits to be observed, and liberty as a condition of spiritual life?

It might be well to start with a great truth like this: the Holy Spirit is most present with a Christian teacher when he is freest. The presumptions are all in favor of freedom; and the people should place themselves in accordance with them, leaning to that side rather than to the side of restriction. The word of God is not bound. But it does not follow that there are not limits of thought and utterance that the preacher should observe, and that the people may insist upon. The question of difference, if it arises, cannot be settled by an assertion that the preaching is not the Gospel, because the very point at issue may be what the Gospel is. The suspected utterance may contain the very heart of the Gospel. Nor can the question be settled by hasty and arbitrary interpretation, for it may be a question of interpretation; the preacher may be right and the people wrong, or *vice versâ*. This possibility that truth may be on the other side should induce great forbearance and toleration on both sides. Such questions cannot be settled by comparing the preaching in a strict way with what are called the standards of orthodoxy; for if there is any one clearly established principle in the Church it is that theology is a progressive and unfolding science, and is constantly undergoing changes and "improvements," as Dr. Edwards phrased it—a process illustrated by the whole history of the Church. The people should constantly keep this great principle before them when their teacher seems to be following new paths. But, on the other hand, they should not allow the principle to run away with them, and tolerate the preacher in uttering whatever may come into his head. It is necessary that the teacher, as well as the people, should have some guiding principles of toleration. Both have their rights and obligations. The preacher who casts his doubts, his crude speculations, his hard denials, his vagaries upon the congregation under some specious theory of liberty, or of the duty of uttering all his thought, is not a true teacher, and he himself dissolves the relation. The people need and should insist upon positive teaching; they may reasonably expect to be led in the general direction in which they have been going. The pulpit is not the field for revolutionary thought, nor is it an arena for theological debate. The Church of God is a flock to be fed, and it may reasonably ask to be led into green pastures and by still waters. The pastures may be new, but they must be green and nourishing; the waters may be fresh, but they must be still, and also "clear as crystal."

If it be asked, Is there not some definite principle or rule by which it can be settled how far the preacher may depart from what are called the "old paths," and at what point the people may remonstrate? I answer that there can be no such definite rule, for the simple reason that there are no sufficiently fixed standards to create it, except the Bible or the Gospel; but it is pre-supposed that the preacher is teaching within these limits. When he gets without the Bible and the Gospel, he is no longer a Christian teacher. "Orthodoxy," "the doctrines of grace," and the phrase, "what is believed always, everywhere, and by all," are elastic terms, and do not furnish a definite rule.

Instead of seeking for such a rule — for *rules* are the letter that killeth — it is better that each case should be settled by itself according to the spirit that maketh alive and the light that may be given at the time. If this seems to leave the matter at loose ends and just where we took it up, I can add some general principles, or rather suggestions, that will be of service in any special case where the preacher seems to be treading on doubtful ground.

1. The people should not forget that their teacher has been put in his place presumably by the call of God, and certainly by the indorsement of the church at large, and finally by themselves. The facts create a strong presumption in favor of the pastor, and should induce favorable consideration.

2. Nor should it be forgotten that there is a persuasive and commanding power in the Gospel itself that tends to hold a student of it within its limits. To readily suspect a teacher of the Gospel is akin to suspecting the Gospel itself.

3. It should also be kept in mind that while the Gospel does not change, the theological conception of it is constantly undergoing new phases, and shares in the growing wisdom of the world. It may be that the preacher is simply interpreting a new phase of the eternally same Gospel.

4. The *consequences* of his teaching should be awaited, and not be condemned in advance because of its apparent *tendencies.* It should be judged by its fruits rather than by its budding leaves. Do not put the vague proverb, *Principiis obsta* (resist beginnings), against the plain word of Christ; for good things as well as evil things have doubtful beginnings. The Gospel itself got foothold under one principle and would have been crushed out under the other. The disposition to judge by *tendencies* lies at the root of all persecution since Christ was crucified. If the results of the teaching are good; if the church is edified in the Christian graces; if the sad are comforted; if the weak are strengthened; if the wicked are converted from their evil ways; if public and private morality is promoted; if faith becomes more intelligent and rational; if the circle of beneficent influence is widened; if, in short, the influence of the teaching is clearly seen to be good in the long run and on a wide scale, despite its apparent effect in some special cases, it may safely be concluded that the pastor is right and that the suspicions are groundless. The advice

of Gamaliel, in its spirit, may well be trusted in such cases, and still more the position of Peter and the first council in Jerusalem, who laid aside their fears and prejudices and accepted the *results* of the preaching of Paul and Barnabas in place of its apparent *tendencies.*

5. Beware of and resist professional heresy-hunters; they are the curse of the Church of Christ, and are indirectly the cause of more heresy than they discover.

6. Regard schism as a deadly sin, and avoid all criticism and dispute that tend to induce it. Dismiss your pastor if he does not preach the Gospel, but do not divide the church over him. To proceed upon suspicious and apparent tendencies is to hazard the latter result; to wait for consequences is to render the former course easy, and thus schism is averted.

7. Base all your relations to your teacher upon confidence. There should be long hesitation and great patience when he seems to be treading the borders of error, or what you deem such. It should be kept steadily in mind that there is a wide space between the pastor trained in theological studies and laymen — a space that is not rendered less by the growing knowledge of the people, for the reason that the science of theology increases its scope in a larger ratio than that of general intelligence. This space is certainly as wide as that between a trained lawyer and an amateur reader of Blackstone. As a general rule, the pastor is to be trusted on the simple ground of superior knowledge — as with lawyers and physicians. If a lawyer loses his cases and the physician his patients in an unusual degree, confidence and patronage are withdrawn. So if a pastor's teaching bears no fruit, and but stirs up doubts and disputes and vain speculations, and yields an intellectual hardness instead of the sweet temper of the Gospel; if he rides hobbies instead of feeding the flock of God, the people may well conclude that he is not a true teacher and proceed accordingly.

Fifth. I have reserved as a last suggestion the one that I deem the most important. You can help your pastor as a student and teacher in no way so well as to offer him a teachable mind and spirit in yourselves. The true pupil makes the true teacher. The docile sheep secure for themselves the best shepherd and the sweetest pasture. It is the demand of the people that calls out all the powers and resources of the student. It is the misery of the preacher that his congregations come before him to be simply interested rather than instructed; hence the temptation to entertain them; hence sensationalism. The pulpit is governed by the pews, and it gives out, for the most part, what is wanted. If there were in them an eager desire to learn the truth of God, an inquiring and teachable spirit, a mind thirsting for the great facts of the Gospel and its cognate truths, the preacher would, in most cases, respond more fully and readily than to any other demand that could be made upon him. It would be in the line of his long preparation; it would accord with the scholarly instinct that study usually develops, and awaken the true professional feeling. With such adjustment between the pews and the pulpit his best powers would be called out, and the best results possible to the relation between them would be secured.

Coming before your teacher in this spirit, and for ends of instruction, you will not complain if he sometimes preaches over your heads. Far better were this than that he should come down to your level. Stretch yourselves up to him rather than drag him down to you. The demand now frequently heard, in some quarters, for simple and plain preaching, so called, is sustained by no example in the Scriptures, nor by the nature of the Gospel, nor by any principle of education, sacred or secular. The *reception* of the facts of the Gospel as the ground of salvation is one thing; the *knowledge* of it is another thing, and the latter is the chief field of the preacher. By its nature as a process of education and training, it cannot be an easy and effortless process. Simple and plain the preaching must be in one sense, but it is the revelation of "the mystery of Christ," a thing not to be compassed without the utmost energy of the mind and spirit. And so I say in conclusion, go up to your teacher, and do not bring him down to you.

II

PASTORAL VISITATION

IT is to be feared that systematic pastoral visitation has fallen into disuse in many churches, greatly to the loss of both pastors and people. A brief statement of its necessity, aims, and advantages may be helpful.

When a minister accepts a call to the pastorate of a particular church, he accepts the spiritual care of all connected with that church and congregation. The care of souls is the radical idea of the pastor's office. The pastor is a shepherd to whom a flock has been committed to guide, to feed, to heal, to defend; and the command is, "Take heed to yourself and to the flock." This pastoral care demands for its exercise accurate personal acquaintances, for as Baxter asks, "How can we take heed to them if we do not know them?" As an indispensable requisite of a successful pastorate, then, the minister needs to make careful, continual and detailed study of his parish. This is his assigned field, not mankind in general. For such study the most efficient means is systematic and well-ordered pastoral visitation. One reason for the apparent waste of ministerial power is that the real events of the special field are not known, and so are not ministered to. Each parish has its peculiarities, and so has each person in it. The congregation must be broken up into its component parts,— separate persons, each one having his own hopes, fears, desires, and aims,— for Christ did not redeem the parish, nor will he judge the congregation. The pastor needs, then, to penetrate beneath the external history and circumstances, and to learn the varieties of character, disposition, mental traits, speculative opinion, habits of life, and besetting sins. He needs to cultivate the gift of discerning spirits, which next to the interpreting of Scripture is the great auxiliary to preaching. He may make his broad distinctions by a study of the church register, but these broad outlines give no personal features; and, if he go no farther, he does not know his people; and they elude his classification and escape his care. By diligent visiting, by hunting out his people, by seeing them again and again in their homes, he comes to know them as they are.

Sometimes general parish oversight, through the net-work of societies and organizations that fall to the minister to manage, is supposed to take the place of visiting and personal contact with individuals; but this does not meet the necessities of the case. That general superintendency or presidency of the parish and pastoral care are not the same thing. The former has respect to the general life of the community and is busy with the machinery, while the latter has to do with internal states, conditions, and tendencies. It is possible, and not uncommon, to do much with the former while doing little with the latter. There are parishes where things are well organized, where there are all sorts of activities and societies, but where there is no proportionate apprehension of and no proportionate provision for the real wants of individual men and women. There may be a lively scene on the surface, but not much going on beneath it. It is not easy, in the restlessness and complexity of his public relations, for a minister to give to this personal part of his work its proper place. Provision must be made for this, and the pastor must be helped. Demands upon his time and attention multiply. In proportion to the importance of his parish, to his personal influence, to his capacity for business, the calls for public and outside service are more frequent and urgent. There are meetings here, committees there, constitutions to be drawn up, organizations to be kept running, records to be made; but shall he be absorbed in presiding, organizing, managing? The danger is not new in our day. It showed itself in the early church, and the apostles met it by division of labor, saying: "It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God and serve tables; search out suitable men for this business, but we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word." As then, so now, much of the detail of general parish work can be better devolved upon others that the minister may be more free to "teach publicly and from house to house," ministering the word in its more spiritual application.

By pastoral visitation is meant some plan by which all the families, and as far as possible all the individuals, of the congregation may be reached by a series of pastoral calls. It may be somewhat difficult to define a pastoral call as distinguished from many other visits which the pastor may and does make, but this at least can be said—it should have distinct reference to the discharge of his duty as the appointed spiritual guide of the people. Some would lay down strict rules for such calls, but there is no one patent way for making them. While a true pastoral call is in the technical sense a professional one, not a visit of mere etiquette or neighborly courtesy, it should be friendly and social, varied according to circumstances, and freed from perfunctoriness and professionalism. Still, its *spirit* should be such that it should be felt to be the visit of the pastor, having as its object to place him in religious contact with his people, to learn their experiences, to remove their perplexities, to comfort them in their sorrows, to stimulate their religious activities, and to help them heavenward.

If this paper were intended for pastors, we might dwell more at length upon methods, but here it will be enough to insist that these calls be distinctly religious; that they be professional but at the same time free, friendly, and unstereotyped; that they be impartial, so that all — poor and rich, young and old, men and women — be made to feel that they have a pastor; that they be brief and to the point, so that in a reasonable time the whole congregation be reached without detracting from thoroughness in pulpit preparation; that they be considered so confidential that the pastor in them may be trusted as a safe and honorable friend and adviser; that they be governed by some regular plan which shall be understood by the people; and that the system be carried out with such persistence that the whole parish be reached, and yet with such flexibility as to enable the pastor to use providential opportunities. How all this shall be done, how much time shall be spent, must depend upon the circumstances of the particular parish and minister.

Among the numerous advantages of pastoral visitation may be mentioned:

First. The personal benefit to the minister himself. This brings religion before him less as a theory and more as a living, personal reality; it broadens his sympathies, and it stimulates him mentally by giving him insight into character, and new views of truth, new subjects and illustrations for sermons.

Second. The good effect upon preaching. The successful preacher needs to be a student of men. The danger is that as the people are not in the study when the sermon is composed they will be forgotten, and the treatment of the subject will be the end and not the means to an end. An observant stranger hearing a sermon will discern, before it is half over, whether the preacher is accustomed to go from house to house or not; there is an unmistakable air of directness about the sermon that has been studied after intercourse with real men and women.

The preacher needs to know the attitude of those around him toward the truth, the delusions in which they acquiesce, the shifts to which they resort, the debates going on within them, the excuses they frame; to know the dubious symptoms, the precarious conditions of those awakened; and to know the growing demands, the expanding capacities, the expectant sympathies of those alive to God. For all this there is no preparation like a round of pastoral visits.

These visits, too, establish relations between the minister and those who are to be his auditors which greatly add to their interest in his sermons. He listens to them in the house that they may listen to him in the pulpit. He thus changes their point of view in reference to his sermons. One with whom the pastor has conversed on vital, personal religion turns to the preacher not merely his critical and intellectual, but his sympathetic nature. This is the secret of effectiveness in many a pastorate, even where there has not been brilliant pulpit eloquence. The pastor has established personal relations with his hearers, has shown an interest in their joys and sorrows, and to them even his least elaborate sermons are clothed with power.

By pastoral visits, too, the minister may supplement his work as a preacher. He can supply and fill out what is lacking in that more impersonal work. Having carefully enunciated the principles from the pulpit, he goes on the week-day into the private house to apply the truth to the individual hearer. The preacher must have a distinct aim. "Some aim at nothing and hit it." Said a parishioner recently of a sermon of his pastor: "He preached to-day, not to the Jews, but at us Yankees." Dr. Theodore Cuyler has said: "After an effective Sunday's work, go around among your flock as Napoleon rode over the field after a battle, to see where the shot struck, and who were among the wounded." The minister needs to perfect himself in both directions—by study and by visiting—for highest usefulness. The two offices of preacher and pastor need to go together. A preacher who is diligent in visiting will gain topics, plans, methods of treatment for his sermons, and thus secure endless variety, because he will never exhaust the practical applications of truth.

Third. Pastoral visitation meets many whom the pulpit does not reach. In every community there are the old, the sick, the sorrowing, and the careless. The pastor is the commissioned messenger to these, and pastoral visits are often the only means he has to adapt instruction, encouragement, comfort, and admonition to each.

Besides, there are many to whom a visit is the opportunity they crave for special questions or for advice, who will not have the courage or take the trouble to make formal application to the pastor except as he puts himself in their way and invites their confidence. In the privacy and stillness of this friendly pastoral intercourse in their own homes, barriers are broken down. They have been sought and they are found.

Fourth. Its practical connection with conversions and revivals. It tends to bring to the crisis which results in conversion. Preaching needs to be followed up, so that the minister may be both sower and reaper. Preaching, if it be what it ought to be, tends to produce an impression, to lead to a decision; but coming at intervals of a week, the impression is too often evanescent. Hence, the practice has arisen of holding protracted meetings or of calling in the aid of so-called evangelists to labor continuously for a given period, that impressions may be repeated—a method that, judiciously employed, is often productive of good results. Now, without disparaging this method, we believe that systematic pastoral visiting can be more successful and show better and larger results. It has been so employed and has been rich in fruits; and it is an evil day for a church when this is neglected and mere mechanical, spasmodic, and temporary appliances are substituted for it. The pastor is himself to "do the work of an evangelist"; and doing this work steadily, faithfully, as Baxter and Chalmers did, is the surest way to bring serious thoughts to an issue, to build up a church, to "make full proof of the ministry."

Fifth. A means of cementing the pastoral relation. Of late years pastorates have become of short duration. Hardly is a minister settled — settled? he is hardly permitted to light — before the question of change begins to be agitated. May not the decline of pastoral visitation be in part an explanation of this? The pastor's personal religious life is not brought into contact with the people, and the only bond between them is his preaching; and when the novelty of his voice and manner has passed away, they are not held to him.

Besides, when he is not faithful to them in private, they feel that he is not earnest in his public performances. On the Lord's day he comes before them proclaiming and urging the most solemn truths, but during the week he does nothing expressive of his concern for their welfare. Such apparent inconsistency weakens their confidence. His heart may yearn for them, but they do not know it. This, too, is a most effective way to keep the whole society united. The pastor, if not known, is misunderstood or misjudged, and as the representative of the church the slight alienation from him extends to what he represents. Little jealousies arise between members of the congregation, or between two families, which he might quickly discover and dissipate; little quarrels begin, which, taken in time, before they become public property, he might easily adjust. The good pastor moving among the families of his parish, like the shuttle of the weaver plying back and forth, weaves and binds them together, making them one fabric. New bonds of sympathy should hold the pastor more firmly year by year in the hearts of his people, and hold them more powerfully as one through him.

Of the value and feasibility of pastoral visitation, abundant testimony is furnished by the experience of successful pastors in large and difficult parishes.

Dr. William M. Taylor, addressing theological students, says: "You will make a great mistake if you undervalue the visitation of your people. The pulpit is your throne, no doubt, but then a throne is stable as it rests on the affections of the people, and to get their affections you must visit them in their dwellings."

Dr. John Hall, speaking to a similar audience, says: "Pains should be taken that nothing prevents your making pastoral visits. It is very necessary for you to know the people in their homes and for the people to know you. The little children and the young people should know you. The men should know you. Do not begrudge the time thus spent. In freely conversing with humble people, you will get side-lights or particular testimony that will make you a stronger man and a better minister for many a day to come." Bishop Simpson says: "I had much timidity when I entered the ministry. But I felt that I must go; the church bade me go; I had promised God I would go; so I went in the Master's name. Such visits made me better, taught me to feel for the people, and to break to them the bread of life with more fitness. In a revival that followed, out of nearly three hundred who came for prayer there were very few with whom I had not previously conversed, and I knew how to enter into their sympathies and to point them to the Lamb of God." Dr. Francis Wayland, in a plea to pastors on this subject, said: "If, at last, it be said that all this is beneath the dignity of our profession, and that we cannot expect an educated man to spend his time in visiting mechanics in their shops, and in sitting down with women engaged in their domestic labor, to converse with them on the subject of religion, to this objection *I* have no reply to offer. Let the objector present his case in its full force to Him who on his journey to Galilee sat thus on the well, and held a memorable conversation with a woman of Samaria."

No pastor can afford to neglect this direct and personal contact with his people, and the people can lend efficient aid to the pastor in this work.

They can encourage him in devising a systematic plan, join with him in carrying it out, and follow him in thought and prayer as he goes from house to house.

In cases of special need, as of sickness, of an expressed desire to see him, of important change of recent removal to the parish, they can notify the pastor.

In receiving a visit from him they can welcome him as engaged in direct ministerial work, and regard him in it as something more than a diligent "diner-out," a busy gossip, an incumbent of a "living," an aimless social caller. They can let him be their pastor and render themselves accessible and transparent to him. They can direct conversation so as to facilitate his acquaintance with their special questionings and difficulties. The minister is often balked in his purpose by the tendency of some to dwell on their neighbors' faults, to recount their bodily ailments or their fancied slights, to air their special notions or hobbies, instead of regarding the visit as an opportunity for mutual acquaintance and a fresh means for religious help and instruction.

They can refrain from that complaining tone that meets the pastor with censure for not coming before, or for not coming often. If he be known to be systematic in his work, faithful in his study, ready in meeting the sick and inquiring, the poor and the aged, he should have the benefit of the supposition that he is wisely dividing his time according to his strength, to what he knows to be the best method of work, or to what, in his comprehension of the whole, he sees to be the most pressing claims. Sometimes a simple arithmetical calculation will show that all cannot be often visited without overtaxing human strength, and that some cannot be often visited without neglecting others.

They need not summon the ghost of some former pastor to affright or humble his successor. That former pastor may have had special facility in this kind of work, and the very reason why he ceased to be the pastor may have been unfaithfulness to his study, or because he overtaxed himself by pastoral work; and yet such a one is often kept as a measuring-rod for those who come after him. His method may or may not have been the best for him, but the present pastor must be left at liberty conscientiously to work out what is best for himself.

They should not begrudge him the time, when, unless there be special need, he is left to consider himself and to pass by as though he could not take up the burden of any — times when he must get away and be by himself. Nothing is more important in visiting than freshness of spirit, and the pastor should not be denied the privilege of proper recreation.

Sometimes the demands made upon the pastor are unreasonable and selfish, and are made to increase the apparent importance of those who urge them, and arise from a desire to be known as specially familiar with him. There is an unjust exaction which stands in the way of free and friendly intercourse, and attaches, or seeks to attach, the minister as the property of the few. It must be borne in mind that the minister is to be the pastor of all, and that his influence should not be circumscribed by the grasping of any.

They can aid him by respecting his appointments. For this, it is well that he have a certain system of study and of visitation, and that this be known, so that arrangements for other things in which he is included may be made in accordance with that. Family arrangements may be made to conform in some degree to his method, so that the benefit of his visit may be secured by all.

They can furnish him direct assistance in reaching the whole congregation, sometimes by providing means of conveyance from one part of the parish to another, sometimes by supplying one or more helpers in the work. Many of the larger churches in rapidly growing communities need the service of more than one man in the ministry to prevent the discontent and the wasteful division of the strong churches. Many times the question of forming a new church could be met by supplying an assistant pastor. One large church, well manned, may be more efficient and have a stronger hold upon a community than two of moderate size that are struggling to meet current expenses. The custom of having a plurality of elders, as in the early churches, may be profitably revived, that pastoral work may be thoroughly done.

The sick are to be regarded as having a first claim upon the attention of the pastor. They cannot go to him and cannot avail themselves of the ordinary means of help and consolation, and they more than others need to be visited, that they may thus partake of what they require.

Many appeals join to make the time of sickness a special opportunity for the pastor. This is often the only door through which he can enter some households successfully. The helplessness, the feeling of need, the isolation, the disappointment of plans, the sober view of life, the fear of death, perhaps— all these call for the sympathy and healing which the pastor is appointed to render.

The sympathy and the fidelity of the religious guide and teacher are then, too, apt to be appreciated. Sickness, even when temporary, places a man in a situation in which the minister has strong hold upon him. It is a kind of extraordinary Sabbath, the only real rest-day that many allow themselves to have for thought and consideration upon higher things. And not only is it an opportunity to reach the sick, but it increases the pastor's influence with the friends, and indeed with the whole congregation. Every one is sensible of the fitness and the merit of his care and zeal at such a time, even without appreciating sufficiently the entire object and results of such work. Much can be done in this way to strengthen the pastor's popularity and general usefulness, and many a pastor has found that conquests of families and neighborhoods as future attendants upon church are thus made. Besides, he remembers that Christ's approval rests upon those of whom he can say: "I was sick and ye visited me"; also that "Himself bare our sickness and carried our infirmities." He knows, too, that sickness often has this providential aspect, that then the Holy Spirit uses the stillness and the seriousness of the soul to good account; that God then in a special manner pleads with men, and through the solitary and thoughtful hours of illness, as through the mazes of a wilderness, the Good Shepherd goes after the lost sheep till he find it.

Here, too, the people can furnish efficient aid to the pastor. They can keep him informed of cases of sickness in the parish. Information should be given at once by friends and neighbors of the fact of sickness, and that a visit from him is desired. For, while a true pastor will not wait to be invited, yet a duty rests upon the sick and their friends toward him, as is evident from James v. 14. The pastor is not to be blamed if he do not know, by instinct, every instance of sickness. In the case of many who are in feeble health, and who are alternately at church and absent from it, he may not know whether or not some one particular detention be out of the regular course of things. Much misunderstanding and even hard feeling might be prevented were pains taken by friends to inform a busy man of what might escape his notice. Every true pastor desires to be with his people in their times of sorrow and need.

The pastor can be helped for his visits upon the sick by being made familiarly acquainted with all the members of the family before. Let parents and teachers make effort to have their children know the pastor, so that when a special visit is necessary, it shall not have a strange and alarming character. Let the pastor enter into the joys and festivities of the household, into its birthday and other joyful anniversaries, as well as into its sick-days and its funerals, that the true pastoral relation and sympathy be established. The writer knows of one pastor to whom many of the young people are accustomed to go when their marriage engagement is to be made public, that the announcement may come through him. Where such a relation exists, there is no difficulty in times of special need—as in sickness and sorrow—in securing a welcome for him.

Let the invitation to him in sickness be sent so promptly, too, that it shall not seem as if the only use for a minister in the sick-room were to administer extreme unction or to prepare the mind for death. He is a friend and consoler, a teacher and companion, and not merely a confessor and priest.

The pastor can be aided by great candor on the part both of the sick and of their friends, and by such confidence in him as intrusts the case to him as the spiritual physician. On his part great wisdom, gentleness, tact, and courage are required; but in the exercise of these he may be greatly hindered unless there be confidence shown toward him. Let the people look upon sickness as furnishing to the spiritual guide great opportunities for good. It is at such times that a pastor should realize in himself and exhibit in his presence the power of the Gospel. We honor our risen and ascended Head by believing that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask and think, that he is able to quicken men dead in trespasses and sins; and if, as Son of Man on earth, he could say to the sick of palsy, "Take up thy bed and walk," much more as the Son of God, with power by the resurrection from the dead, can he say to the sick man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Weak as the minister may be, he may wield a rod mightier than that of Moses; and that pastor to whom has been imparted the ministerial gifts of faith, of sympathy, of love is a true minister of consolation, and can go forth as a prince with God to prevail by sick and dying beds.

III

FUNERALS

HOW shall we treat our dead? So much has this subject to do with what is dearest and most sacred to the heart, that the discussion of it is a matter of peculiar difficulty and delicacy. Yet as the matter is one of great practical importance, its thorough and candid consideration seems demanded on the part of pastors and people.

Since the beginning of the world, so far as we have any account, a vast amount of conventional nonsense, not to call it by a worse name, has followed in the wake of death. Rending the hair and rending the garments; shearing the hair and shearing the horses' manes; covering the whole person with a veil; sprinkling dust or ashes on the head; going bareheaded, barefooted, and unwashed; rolling in the dirt; beating the breast; lacerating the face; staining the hands and feet with indigo; hired women tearing their arms, their faces, and their hair as they dance and howl before the house of the dead, or else in forlornest *déshabillé* flying and crying through the streets; burning portions of the survivors' bodies; burning hapless widows, willing and unwilling; going with unchanged garments, untrimmed nails, and unshaven face for thirty or fifty days; bereaved men assuming women's garments to mourn in; filling bottles with saved-up mourning tears; painting the lower half of the face black; knocking out the front teeth; screaming and screeching, groaning, howling, and wailing; piercing the flesh with arrows and sharp stones; cutting off quantities of human fingers to be hung above the tomb; laying sixty blows on the bereaved, and then marching these doubly afflicted souls into a year's exile; for thirteen months of half, or what might be called abbreviated mourning, sleeping on the bare ground, with leaves instead of garments for a covering; on the tenth day, women scourging all the men, except the highest in rank; at an imperial death forbidding the cutting of hair for a hundred days, and sometimes the whole nation, feigning madness from desperate grief, going about robbing and murdering and committing all manner of crimes,— in short, there is no end to fashion's funereal follies.

With the advance of civilization there have been some modifications, as among the Jews, the giving up of the rending of garments, their incision symbolizing the deed. There is also a general toning down of the more noisy and violent demonstrations. But as yet we see hardly the beginning of the cure of this widespread, deep-seated barbarism — deep-seated because connected with what is most sacred in our nature.

Not long since, at a Chinese funeral in New-York, there were scattered from the hearse, all along the road, slips of rice-paper, to delay the devil, who, in his customary pursuit of the dead, stops to examine them. Thus the mourners gained time to hurry the body into the ground before that personage could reach it. After the filling of the grave, red candles and bunches of odorous matches being placed at its foot and ignited, the clothing of the deceased was laid on them and consumed. When meat, rice, and tea had been deposited for the journey of the departed, every Chinaman approached the grave and made a number of profound parting bows! So much for heathendom.

And how do we find it in Christian lands? In England, with all its enlightenment, mourners are in some places an understood part of the funeral procession, though now excused from all pretense-making except that of silent grief. In that country, as well as on the Continent, to watch one of those lugubrious processions — coaches and coachmen alike funereal — with the forlorn "mutes" draped from head to foot in black, and creeping gloomily along at so many pennies or groschen an hour, it is enough to make one feel that the end of the world is come. And deepening the impression, formerly, at a distinguished death, herald-like, there walked before the hearse men holding aloft a gumpheon, which is, being interpreted, a mourning pole with sable-covered top. Anybody or anything in white would not be tolerated; all must be black, black, everywhere the blackest black.

Yet, once among the French and Spanish black was white, as indeed it is at the present time in Japan and China, white being the prescribed mourning color. Even with the Scotch, mourners wear white cambric. At the death of the dowager Empress of China, the premises appropriated by the Chinese embassy were draped in white. The season of mourning continued one month, during which time attachés of the legation refrained from all social entertainments and wore white cotton gowns.

With us, also, even in this latter half of the nineteenth century, fashion abates not a jot nor a tittle of her claim to the blackest garments and the deepest crapes and the longest veils, and the most punctilious withdrawals and isolations, and the heaviest funereal borderings of cards, letters, and envelopes, and all that outward paraphernalia which, as to the real expression of grief, seems so much and is so little. Indeed, her despotism sometimes becomes a grim mockery; for if a marriage takes place among her subjects during "full mourning," even the wedding-cards must go out to the world wearing a black border of grief. Nor does her tyranny end here; for in due time the mourners must come out from their mourning even as they went in — according to exact rules drawn up and enforced by modistes and milliners. The same autocrat that shut up these her mourning subjects has no idea of permitting them to remain forever immured in the sanctuary and the habiliments of sorrow. They must return to gayety and bright colors, however, only through the intermediate stages of lavender and purple. Hence, by the time they are in the last stage, the cheerful garments which, during all this term of mourning and half-mourning, have been lying idle, are entirely out of vogue, both as to matter and manner, requiring fresh outlays.

As, in some countries, families of limited means have been financially ruined by the expensive feasts continued for weeks, at which "funeral baked meats" were freely furnished, so among us are those who never recover from the pecuniary embarrassments brought upon them, not by Death, but by his senseless accompaniments.

Think of what usually occurs when the grim King enters a dwelling. Not a moment for quiet recollection and communing with the dead, but, instead, a house-clearing from attic to cellar; milliners and dressmakers filling the rooms with their somber loads and engrossing the attention of the whole household, and the arranging upon and around the elegant casket of multitudinous flowers, clipped short and fantastically wired. In due time comes the enwrapping the bereaved in sable weeds, graduated according to their kinship with the deceased, and the shutting them up by themselves for the funeral services; the exposing to the gaze of vulgar curiosity the face of the dear one, who in life would have shrunk from such an ordeal; the planting of the minister at the middle or head of the stairs, where he is exposed to draughts from the perpetual opening and shutting of doors, where he can neither see nor be seen by his auditors, and where his words fall against senseless walls, and must sometimes travel round and round in order to reach the chamber of mourners.

Then comes the calling off in business tones of a long list of names ceremoniously graded from the nearest of kin down to the fortieth cousinship, every one responding to the call by being marched down the stairs and out-of-doors, to be put into a doleful black carriage, there to sit in gloomy state till the train of coaches, more or less, but generally more, is ready to start, and then to move slowly on behind the nodding plumes in the solemn, long-drawn-out procession, with the sad death-knell sounding at regular intervals and striking a chill to the aching heart, and, finally, the standing round the open grave while the clods are thrown upon the coffin,—what excruciating scenes are these for the survivor!

Surely all this dismal ceremonial, this sepulchral display, these funeral drapings and trappings savor more of heathendom than of Christianity. And what are these symbols of woe understood to represent? The sorrow of the survivor? By no means. They are not unfrequently a decorous veil to hide indifference, or even a sense of relief. They are simply the fashion, and although they may, and do often, accompany the sincerest mourning, they have not the smallest necessary connection with it, and are frequently a serious drawback to the real benefit of affliction.

It is argued that mourning garments are a protection against careless or disturbing approaches. This may sometimes be the case, yet they are so often regarded as the formalities of fashion, or the exactions of mere custom, as almost to have lost their natural association. On the other hand, they frequently expose one to a painful publicity, being the fullest proclamation of the most private, sacred sorrow.

Then what a gloomy aspect do these somber garments give to a household. A widowed mother, who had worn black for years, once told me that she had often regretted her course, as it had been a great trial to her only child, an artistic, sensitive boy, who used to intreat her to wear bright colors like other mothers. Think of thus needlessly clouding the young days of a loving child!

But again, what does all this harrowing display represent? On what occasions do we wrap ourselves and everything about us in this dismal drapery? When our dear ones have crossed the dark river and reached the shining shore; when their weeping is turned into rejoicing; when earth is exchanged for heaven. Then, so far as that remediless sense of loss is concerned which often weighs down the survivor, there is exactly as much reason for wearing mourning twenty years as two. The loving heart *never* forgets; years after the waves of life have closed over the memory of the departed ones there burst over us now and again fresh storms of grief, and our tears are no less bitter, our yearnings no less passionate, then when the blow first fell. Yet, long ago, custom-bound, we passed from full to half mourning, and are now in our wonted cheerful colors.

It is bad enough to have Mrs. Grundy tyrannize over us in our days of sunshine. But when my loved ones are stricken down, bar her out from my doors. As I sit beside my dead, let her not intrude with her black hats for me to try on, and her long veils of unwholesome crape to cover me withal. Let her not come near me at such a time to fit me according to the latest mode, to drape me in trailing sable garments, loaded with folds of crape, proportioned, not to my love for the departed, but to the relationship between us. However she may in general dominate my life, at such a time I will have none of her.

No one, of course, advocates the wearing of flaunting colors or gay attire on such occasions. That would be in as bad taste as appearing on the streets in party costume. There is a fitness of things which should always be consulted. But an ordinary black dress, or one of any sober color, such as are in every wardrobe, is entirely appropriate.

Is there not in this question an appeal to one's benevolence? Our sympathy for the poor in their every-day life is often so heavily taxed, that when we hear of a great mortality among them, we have a feeling that the occasion is almost one for congratulation rather than regret, in the lessening number to be clothed and fed. But a second thought reverses this feeling. For in addition to the fact that natural affection is as strong with the poor as with the rich, we remember that it often costs more to die than to live. And this is because our customs on such occasions are so utterly senseless, to use no harder word, that in following them people are sometimes involved in expenses from the effects of which they never recover.

A funeral is the one thing in which the poorest feel that they cannot economize. A very needy woman with a flock of little ones, having lost her husband, a few friends gave her a hundred dollars for food and clothing. After the funeral she called on some of her friends for help, saying that her children were starving. "But what has become of that hundred dollars?" "Oh, I spent all that on the funeral." Notwithstanding the doctor's bill and many other expenses incidental to sickness, such people consider it absolutely necessary to follow, as far as possible, in the wake of the rich. Even a plain whitewood coffin with trimmings can hardly be obtained for less than twelve dollars, while the charge for an ordinary hearse is from five to ten; of a single carriage from two to six, according to the locality; and of a grave from eight dollars upward. Thus the cost of a burial service seldom falls below twenty-five or thirty dollars, and from that point ranges all along, sometimes coming up as high as three thousand dollars, the sum expended not long since at the funeral of a young girl in one of our large cities.

Sometimes all the signs and symbols of mourning are adopted without consideration, as a mere matter of course. In other cases, they are dictated by the truest sentiment and the most genuine affection, an affection which cannot do enough to satisfy itself. But would not greater reflection modify this practice?

It is no more than we should have expected from that grand woman, Sarah Grimke, that in her sympathy for the poor, as well as from Christian simplicity, she should have requested her friends to inclose her remains in the plainest, most inexpensive coffin. There was nothing somber on that funeral occasion.

Not many years later, her sister, Angelina Grimke Weld, followed her. In the account of the last rites, we read: "The funeral services throughout wore no air of gloom. Somber crape shrouded no one with its dismal tokens. The light of a glorious autumn day streamed in through uncurtained windows. It was not a house of mourning. No sad word said, no look of sorrow worn. Who that loved her did not feel that, however keen the sense of personal loss, it was all swallowed up in her blessed deliverance and unspeakable gain?"

In the description of William Lloyd Garrison's funeral, not many months after, we find another similar delightful instance: "In accordance with Mr. Garrison's views of death, care was taken to avoid the appearance of mourning and gloom, which generally characterizes such occasions. The blinds were open to admit the sweet sunlight, the pulpit was decorated with flowers, and the hymns of cheer and inspiration of which he was so fond were sung."

Contrast the two modes. The one, from its well-nigh despairing outlook, might almost be called pagan; while the other is suggestive of a blessed immortality. *Why* should we make funerals so costly and so dismal? At the moment when, above all others, we would be free to indulge in memories of the departed; when the Lord has come very near that he may impress on us the fact that our home is within those gates of pearl, just opened to receive our dear one; when we feel, as perhaps never before, how worse than vain are all pretenses, all serving of mammon, all worldly ambitions,—at such a time must we be bound tight with the iron cramps of custom? and must her grievous burdens be laid, even then, upon our shoulders?

The pastor comes in for his full share of these trials and perplexities. In the first place, there is the getting to the funeral. It is only fitting that this should be provided for by those needing his services. Many, however, it is to be hoped from sheer thoughtlessness, give themselves no concern on this point. Near or far, rain or shine, in the heat of summer and in the cold of winter, he is expected to convey himself; and if he owns no vehicle, he must either hire one or his own feet must serve his purpose. There are clergymen who have had rather hard experiences in this line, of which I am tempted to give one or two instances.

In a certain town a minister was called to attend a funeral at a distance of four miles, and over rough and hilly roads. He paid four dollars for a conveyance, and spent the whole day in going and returning in the wind and rain. "A son of the deceased promised to call and *settle.* And he *did.* He brought half a wagon load of wet roots and sticks, which he called wood, that had lain soaking in a pond for years. Then entering the parsonage with a satisfied air, he sat down to dinner, and having eaten enough roast beef, at thirty cents a pound, to have fed all the family, went home with the belief that he had been very liberal to the parson."

Another minister tells a story of a rich parishioner who, from his orchard, manufactured large quantities of vinegar. "When his daughter sickened, I went there almost every day, about five miles off. When she died, I sat up most of the night to write a funeral sermon. I called the next day. Then a few days after I went, carrying my vinegar-jug, which just then happened to be empty. The jug was filled, and as I did not like to take it without offering compensation, I meekly asked, 'What shall I pay you?' 'Well,' said my good parishioner, 'I generally charge twenty-five cents a gallon; but seeing you have been so kind to me in my trouble, I won't charge you but twenty cents.' At this time I had eleven children, and was living on a salary of six hundred dollars."

This is an exceptional case, yet inconsiderateness in a lesser degree is by no means uncommon. Then, as is illustrated by the last anecdote, custom in many places requires the preaching of a funeral sermon at the death, not only of saints, but also of unmistakable sinners. Added to the amount of labor such a custom involves is the peculiar difficulty and delicacy of the task. Sometimes the minister knows almost nothing of the deceased, and, if he attempts to give a portraiture of character, is obliged to draw mostly on his own imagination. Very awkward mistakes have happened from taking things for granted on such occasions. At the public funeral of a rumseller, who had committed suicide rather than go to jail, the innocent clergyman read the hymn:

"What though earth's fairest blossoms die?"

Sometimes the minister knows too much about the one whose death he is to signalize by a funeral sermon. How shall he manage so as to be true to his own convictions and yet not give offense at the right and left? He can make use of the opportunity to warn men against evil courses, but that is the very last thing the friends of the departed will tolerate. For many reasons, the usage is often "better honored in the breach than the observance."

But the prayer, also, not unfrequently causes the minister real embarrassment. In this, especially if there has been no sermon, he is often expected to sound the praises of the departed, even in cases where silence is the only fitting thing. Moreover, he must pray discriminatingly for the several members of the family, and for other relatives, near or remote. If he happens to omit any one, he may give offense, and he may give equal offense by not saying the desired thing.

Then, no matter how long or cold may have been the ride to the cemetery, or how thoroughly chilled he may have become, or how old and infirm he is, he must stand beside the grave with uncovered head while he offers a prayer, repeats a passage of Scripture, pronounces the benediction, and, in some parts of the country, thanks those present for their attendance. There is reason for congratulation, however, that he is not now, as formerly, obliged to stand thus exposed while the grave is filled up.

Now, why not simplify the matter by committing the burial to the undertaker, with some representative of the family to accompany him? You may say this would be heartless; but remember that it is only fashion which keeps up the present expensive and unnatural arrangement. What an amount of mere punctilious observances would such a change at once put an end to! Even if there should be no change as to mourning attire, the bereaved family would at least escape that hurry and confusion of preparation immediately following upon a death. And what a blessing to those of limited means would be the entire dispensing with funeral carriages! But, more important than all, are the considerations of health; for many a death has been the result of exposure on the way to the grave, and in the long waiting there.

There are many encouraging tokens that changes in public sentiment on all this matter are gradually taking place. As an indication of progress, note the fact that the clergymen of Troy, N. Y., have adopted a resolution recommending the omission of unnecessary expenses at funerals, suggesting the expediency of consulting the officiating clergyman before fixing the time, and disapproving of the fashion of costly mourning.

In Newburgh, N. Y., the "Ministers' Meeting," where every denomination was represented but the Roman Catholic, unanimously approved of the following resolutions:

"1. That burial services be limited, so far as practicable, to Scripture reading, singing, and prayer.

"2. That we deprecate the appointment of funeral services for Sunday.

"3. That we also deprecate the public exposure of remains.

"4. That before the arrangements are made as to the time and place of the burial service, the convenience of the officiating clergyman should be consulted."

One of the ministers present submitted the following considerations, which led to the action taken:

"1. A protracted funeral service at the home, especially where sickness and death have occurred, is a needless exposure of those in attendance.

"2. A protracted service, especially when the weather is unpleasant or inclement, when those convened are not warmly clad, increases liability to exposure of health in going to the grave and at the time of burial.

"3. The Scripture lesson and the prayer do ordinarily furnish all the counsel and consolation needful.

"4. It is our conviction that but little of good is accomplished by funeral discourses, except when the death itself is exceptionally impressive.

"5. Ministers are often embarrassed and brought to a degree of discredit by inappropriateness of remarks, by ignorance of peculiar features of the life or family of the deceased, by saying too little or too much in the view of biased and prejudiced minds and fear of giving offense.

"6. At times deaths are frequent, especially among the young and infants, when the delivery of a discourse serves no purpose that would not be served as well by prayer, Scripture reading, and private conversation.

"7. To omit discourse on some occasions and not on others would be offensive to some, and suggests the importance of specific and uniform rules for funeral services."

Let us, then, welcome every indication of a favorable change. Occasionally, in the notice of a funeral, "*No flowers*" is made emphatic. The emphasis is well placed; for the presentation of flowers, unnaturally wired into crosses, and crowns, and stars, and all manner of artificial shapes, has become such a rage that families are thrown into serious embarrassment by a veritable floral deluge. The strange contrast between this holiday adorning and the somber attire and gloomy aspect of the household would strike every one but that it is the fashion.

There are many who never put on mourning garments, and their number is steadily increasing. Let us be thankful for every such example. A candid discussion of the extravagances and other evils connected with this subject must surely in time lead to great modifications.

The question of burial associations in our churches has been raised, and an instance is cited of such an association in a New England church, the members paying a small entrance fee, and a tax of fifty cents at any death in their families. Every member, whatever may be his circumstances, is pledged to accept this contribution on occasion of mortality in his own family, so that the needy may not repel it as a charity. Similar associations have been formed in some of our cities.

Arrangements for the poor seem very desirable, either on the part of cemetery associations or of the town or city governments. There are some Protestant churches which own plots for the burial of their own indigent members, but as a general thing the Roman Catholics are in advance of us in this respect. In the Roman Ritual, which obliges observance everywhere, is the following requirement: "The poor, who have little or nothing by which their burial expenses should be paid, must be buried entirely without charge." And there is no separate or distinct place set apart for them.

There seems an undue importance attached by many to the place of interment. Is not this feeling, in part, an unconscious outgrowth of the materialism of the present day? Let us not confound soul and body. Let us not cling to the spot where the latter lies buried, as if our dear one were in the grave. We would think of it merely as a cast-off garment, to be cherished only for association's sake, as a mother tenderly cherishes a little shoe, or some precious memento of a lost darling. But we cannot preserve the cast-off garment of the soul. The attempt is a ghastly mockery, as testify the grim mummies embalmed at so great cost. Instead of such attempts, let us have decay, which, throughout the entire realm of nature, follows death.

Indeed, if there can be no radical improvement in our present style of treating the dead, almost any change would be a blessing. Rather, far rather, than one of our modern "handsome funerals," I would choose cremation. Truly, it matters little what becomes of the empty casket — whether it be "dust to dust" or "ashes to ashes."

In the burial of our dead, let the healthy, natural instincts be followed. Above all, let those who attend funerals from a mere morbid curiosity, and who feel highly aggrieved if they are not allowed to "look upon the corpse,"— let all such stay away!

Thrice welcome will be the day when we dispense with this splendid show of superb caskets and heaps on heaps of costly flowers in artificial forms; this dismal draping of surviving friends; this long array of gloomy and sometimes in part empty carriages; this exposure of health; this public announcing and emphasizing one's loss by black-bordered cards and letters! Abandoning the mere outward symbols of grief, let us trust to our better instincts; let us have only such flowers as are the simple offering of tender affection; let us in all this matter follow the leadings of a refined Christian taste.

What a blessing to the poor and those of limited means would be such an example on the part of church-members and of leaders in society! What a welcome change to those of every grade would be the dispensing with unnecessary formalities and mere ceremonies, and the introduction of a beautiful simplicity in all the appointments of our funerals! The saving of time and expense and anxiety that would result from such a gracious change would almost exceed belief. And all this could be done without sacrificing anything that is really fitting, and with an unspeakable gain to the whole community.

IV

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH FOR WORK

IF the church is to be fully efficient, it must be organized. Individual ordination for service is an essential condition of success. Not less essential is individual coördination for service. By coördination in the church is intended the combination of individuals for the most varied service of which we have knowledge.

Politics are organized; labor is organized; business is organized; religion must be organized. This is one of the lessons taught us by the children of this world; one, also, which we are surprisingly slow to learn. But the thing must be done. In dealing with this subject this is one of the postulates: the church must be organized.

Definitely, what does this mean? We say the thing must be done. What is the thing to be done? The answer is not difficult. We should carry coördination of effort into every region of the church life. The Sunday-school should be organized; the worship, the music, the social life, the charities, the reformatory enterprises, the devotional meetings, the missionary activities, intercessory prayer, personal work, should all be carefully organized. Men and women, youth and children, should be trained to develop the immensely increased power which is found in singing, worshiping, praying, giving, evangelizing together.

The pastor must believe in organization: most pastors do. The training of pastors (on this line, if not so conspicuously in other directions) is far wiser than in former times. But, here and there still, a pastor may be found who does not discern his time. He believes in preaching, in praying, in sociability, in personal work, but he is not clear about organization. He should be. The church has a duty toward such a pastor. If the church is to be organized, it must have a leader. The pastor is the ordained leader. The church may need to remind him that for giving full proof of his ministry he requires not simply ordination, but coördination.

If a pastor objects, "Some men can organize, I have not the gift," let him be reminded that he is in the succession of men who were instructed and trained to fish with a net, and to arrange companies of thousands into orderly groups and feed them. All men have, in some measure, the gift of organization. This gift is involved in the call to religious leadership. What would be thought of a man preferring claims to business, or political, or musical, or social direction, who should confess that he had no talent for organization? The pastor who, for any reason, has this faculty undeveloped, should be stimulated to stir up the gift that is in him.

A pastor cannot effect the organization of the church alone. He may think differently. The church may think differently. He may attempt it. In instances he may have a qualified success. He may construct a machine upon his own designs, and run it with his own motive power. In this way much may be accomplished. But, even when seen at its best, it is not the best way. As a rule it develops self-will and self-sufficiency in the pastor, and in the people criticism and irresponsibleness. The pastor is but the leader. It is the church which, under its leader, by his intelligent aid, is to organize itself.

In successful organization the people must coöperate with the pastor. Coöperation on the part of the people involves, among others, these important particulars:

First. Response. When the leader proposes a new plan, the people should harbor it. Their first and studied attitude should be of friendliness. The presumption should be that it must be a good and wise plan, the supposition being that the leader has accustomed the people to be able to put confidence in his judgment; that no suggestion will come from him until it has been carefully canvassed, and matured by consultation with the wise men and women of the church.

Toward a plan thus originated, the attitude of the church should be responsive: "We will try it." Many excellent plans of work fail to reach the stage of experiment, because met at the outset by criticism, instead of a loyal responsiveness.

When God has given the church a leader, let the church treat him as a leader. Closely to be associated with responsiveness, but an idea distinct from it, is:

Second. Obedience. This brings to view the individual. The attitude of the individual, corresponding to the responsiveness which leads the church to say, "Let the new plan be tried," is obedience, leading him to say, "Here am I; send me."

The church, through its pastor, has a right to lay hands of ordination upon workers. The ideal system of securing workers is by voluntary enlistment. But, in practice, this method is a failure—for one reason, because so many of us do not know what we can do best, but for another reason that so many of us are reluctant to enlist at all. The pastor, as a rule, can more easily select the workers for a given service than these can select their work. When, in the name of the church, with the approval of the church, he lays hands upon men and women, loyalty will lead them to obey the call. If organization is to be successful, it must find in the rank and file of the church a spirit of disciplined obedience. How many declinations, and resignations, and excuses, and criticisms would be saved if we realized that such responses to the hand of the leader, the church, the Saviour, laid upon us, are disobedience, and essential disloyalty. One more point of coöperation should be mentioned. It is:

Third. The spirit of organization. This spirit will coöperate in the application of tried plans, or in the testing of those untried. But, more than this,—the thought now especially in view,—it will be suggestive of new plans. A Christian characterized by it will have that invaluable quality, inventiveness in methods. In some manufacturing establishments the workmen are encouraged to study the machinery with the aim of its improvement. This, it has been found, makes the mind suggestive. Valuable inventions have thus originated. The members should study the church, viewing it as a mechanism, admirable indeed, but capable of indefinite improvement. The spirit of organization should be fostered. It should be a conviction diffused through the church, that plans may be suggested, not alone by the pastor, or by leading men and women; from the humbler members, and from children, some of the most fruitful suggestions may spring. In a celebrated manufactory, one of the most ingenious, and at the same time simple and valuable, machines was the invention of a little boy, who, in attending to his humble task, made the bright and profitable discovery.

There are certain regulative ideas, the due regard to which will promote organization. Through disregard of these, organization will be hindered.

One of these ideas is *the place of delay*. New plans need time, that they may become distinctly apprehended by the people. Distinct apprehension is essential, if they are to be intelligently adopted. Any new plan should first be suggested. Time should be given to canvass it fully. The slowest and most critical minds should be considered. It may be necessary, oftentimes it is so, to act upon the decision of a majority. But in a society of the peculiar and sensitive constitution of the church, it is extremely desirable to have unanimity in all important decisions. It is worth long delay to secure it. As a rule, new suggestions should contemplate months—in instances, a year—of examination, mutual conference, prayer, and gradually diffused appreciation. Very often plans have been inaugurated too soon. The result may be the complete failure of valuable methods. If there were space, examples could readily be given.

A second regulative idea is *the wisdom of variation*. Our plans require frequent variations. The plans in use may be good. They may work well. They may be perfect. After a time, nevertheless, it will be wise to vary even a perfect plan of conducting social gatherings and prayer-meetings, of visitation, of raising money, of carrying on missionary work. Change gives zest. It stimulates enthusiasm. With a spirit of organization, watchful and alert, variation will be natural and timely. The regulation necessary in that case will be to restrain excessive variation.

The mention anew of the spirit of organization suggests one more regulative idea, and the most important—the *need of the Holy Spirit*. The suggestions we want are his inspirations. The motive power we want is his impulsion. A spiritual church will organize itself, because the work of the

Spirit is organic. He coördinates the divided powers in the individual goal. He organizes the members of the church into unions of endless variety, but with the one all-inclusive aim, to extend the kingdom of God.

Let the pastor and the church which have become awakened to the importance of organization perceive this: that effective organization is a vital process, and that "the Spirit giveth life." It is pertinent here to remark that no time is so favorable for the introduction of new plans, which are good, but which require sacrifice for their successful prosecution, as a time of revival. Then the church is flexible and can be molded into almost any desirable form.

It remains to raise the practical question, which some may now be asking, How shall we begin to organize our church? Some churches ask this, wishing to begin anew, and some, it is possible, which have never made a beginning. Our answer is: Begin anywhere.

Begin with the children. Organize a children's class. Teach them; train them; set them at work; invite their coöperation; teach them how to work; stir their inventiveness; lay responsibility upon them. They will respond. Children will obey. Their minds you will find delightfully suggestive. The *esprit de corps* of children is one of the great latent powers of the church. Begin with the children. A whole church may be stirred by a well-organized pastor's class, sustained by the sympathy and aid of wise fathers and mothers, and deacons, and church committees.

Begin with the young men. The church may be large and have many young men, or it may have few. In either case, no better place for a beginning can be named. The young men themselves may make the beginning; two of them! even one of them! It makes little difference whether the suggestion comes from the pastor or from their own number. Let them make a praying circle, and invite others to join it, and organize a simple society, aimed to answer one practical question: "What can we young men do for the young men of this church, and congregation, and of this town?" Wonderful things have come from as simple a beginning as the meeting of two young men, with the conception that there is everywhere a distinctive and great work for young men to do. They met alone. They invited their pastor to join them. They fixed a time and a place for a young men's meeting. They organized themselves into a little society with a simple constitution, and with the one well-defined and prayerful purpose to reach all the young men in the church and congregation, and to use their organization as it was developed to reach young men in the city. Out of this organization grew a similar organization of young ladies, and a well-directed effort to increase the Sunday-evening congregation, and a stimulus, powerfully felt, throughout the entire body of the church.

What was possible to these young men is possible anywhere. Begin with the young men. Or begin with the young women. Begin with a band of visitors to canvass the parish. Begin with a ladies' prayer-meeting. Begin with a choral society. Begin anywhere, but begin. And having begun, never stop until a complete, vital, disciplined, fruitful organization is realized. This is possible in every church. Through it (and through it alone) the smallest church can cover the largest town; the city can be evangelized; the world can be taken for Christ.

V

THE CHURCH PORCH

THE commission of our Lord to his apostles (Matt. xxviii, 19), "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them [the nations] into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you," with the promise of his continued presence, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," has always been quoted, and properly, for foreign missionary purposes. But such quotation does not, by any means, exhaust its content. The words "disciple," and "teach," suggest much. The application of these words, together with the word "baptize," to nations is peculiar. The word "nation" must include everybody within the confines of the term. In all nations there are some to whom the words "disciple" and "teach" must have special application. It is very difficult to "disciple" an adult; much more difficult to "teach" him. Only those adults who have retained the spirit of disciples are easy to teach. It would almost seem that in the very terms used there is something in the nature of a suggestion as to the kind of work which, in the Christian church, will be of the first importance. Children are "disciples," in spite of themselves. They are so absorbent in their nature that whatever is presented to them they receive. Moreover, it is recognized universally that impressions made in childhood remain. The question whether children are capable of receiving religious teaching seems to be removed out of the region of debate by such instances as that of Samuel and Timothy, and by such words as those in the Old Testament, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," and by the still sweeter words of our Lord, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God,"—a passage which seems to suggest that teaching about himself is thoroughly adapted to the nature and capacity of a child. How soon the religious nature in a child begins to manifest itself is one of those questions the answer to which will depend on the view we take of religion. For myself, regarding the religiousness of our nature as intuitive, I should be inclined to say that it begins with the dawn of consciousness. From the very first, religiousness is *there*, to be developed or repressed according to the conditions in which a child lives. If the house be of such an atmosphere and temperature that the religious intuitions can develop naturally, the piety of a child will be only as the deepening, sweetening, and purifying of the character which was previously in some "Grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice." Nothing can be a substitute for a Christian home. However wise in conception and excellent in quality the ministries to children in the church, if they are antagonized by what is said and done at home they will seem forced and artificial — out of line with the natural order of things. Christianized homes are the first necessity.

Yet these cannot stand alone. Everything in this world seems to demand something else to give it companionship and completeness. The Christian home requires the Christian church, with its dignity, authority, and fellowship. In a Christian church there are almost certainly to be found those who can be helpers of mothers and fathers in the religious nurture of their children. Every Christian church ought to be so organized as that "they that are strong [the adult members] should bear the infirmities of the weak" (the children). I say, "organized"; every church should have its "Church Porch"—the vestibule through which, for the young, entrance is made into the church. Religion does not begin there, as I have said, being of the opinion of one of the wisest of modern men, who writes: "It can also be shown by sufficient evidence that more is done to affect, or fix, the moral and religious character of children before the age of language than after; that the age of impressions when parents are commonly waiting, in idle security, or trifling away their time in mischievous indiscretions, or giving up their children to the chance of such keeping as nurses and attendants may exercise, is, in fact, their golden opportunity, when more is likely to be done for their advantage or damage than in all the instruction and discipline of their minority afterward." But the religiousness of feeling nourished in the home should be brought into a more distinct recognition of itself in the Church Porch. There it should be so associated and directed as to become intelligence and will. There the child should be made to perceive that it has a life in common, and belongs to a larger relationship than the limited one of home. There it should learn that in God's design and plan it belongs to the church. The expectation that under the influence of adapted "means of grace" our sons and daughters will graduate into the full benefits and responsibilities of church life should be constantly present to them. Children ought not to be treated unfairly, nor any undue advantage taken of their sensitiveness to the good opinion of others. They have *feeling* enough at all times. The Church Porch should be the place for developing *will* and *intelligence*, and for so guiding the young, as that when they are ready for church membership they should be ready, with a completeness which, apart from some specific training, is not possible to them.

Too often, in the present condition of things, the church is assumed to be the natural place for those only who are conscious of their own goodness (Pharisaic), or who are in some way different from the average Christian disciple. The Church Porch ought to train its catechumens to recognize that the church is the fellowship of all Christian disciples, and that a disciple is in as inconsistent a position out of the church as a Pontius Pilate or a Herod or a Judas would be in it.

To the extent of his opportunity it is the pastor's duty to train the children of the church with a view to church-fellowship. Being the pastor of the church, he is necessarily the pastor of the children of the church. He may exercise his pastorate — must so exercise it — through others. He may invite those of the members of the church who seem to him most fitted for it to coöperate with him in whatsoever methods commend themselves as most adapted to secure the end sought. The prevailing idea of the Sunday-school seems to be a place for general Bible instruction. Ninety per cent. of Sunday-school teachers recognize that they have done all that is required of them when they have "explained the lesson." The more earnest among them make such application of the truths taught as seems to them practicable. But the tendency to substitute the Sunday-school for the church and for home instruction cannot be regarded by thoughtful Christians with unconcern. We need, in addition to the Sunday-school, a Church Porch, whose design is not simply to convey instruction, but to bring the children into an organism which has no more completeness in itself than has the porch of an ecclesiastical building. It is a passage-way into a larger and completer relationship. Happily there are springing up all over the country "societies" controlled by this idea. Their title, "Societies of Christian Endeavor," does not seem to me to be very happily chosen. It is too indefinite. We need that Scriptural terms, for which we can substitute no other that are adequate, should be kept before the minds of young and old.

I assume that it is the duty of the pastor of a church to hold himself responsible to the extent of seeing that adequate means are provided for the training church-ward of the children of the church.

I assume also that all adult church-members will recognize that this training will be effective or ineffective in the degree of their own willingness to coöperate with the pastor.

A Church Porch being established, it will necessarily be such an organization as will aim to secure the end sought. In the one direction it will be connected with the family; in the other, with the church—a link between the two. It will have as its honorary officers the pastor and deacons of the church; as its executive, young men and women of such an age as to have sufficient ripeness of judgment to know how to act with wisdom and discretion. The adult Christian fellowship of the church will be at the back of it, encouraging the attendance of their children upon its meetings, regularly and conscientiously, for to develop character is one of the great aims. The Church Porch will provide some simple words, which are of the nature of a confession of discipleship to the great Head of the church. It will so conduct its meetings as that the youngest may take some small part. It will so organize itself as that the members shall have "mutual care one of another." It will provide meetings for social intercourse as well as for devotional, thus recognizing the good of all innocent recreation. It will provide for the daily home reading by its members of wisely selected Scriptures. It will have some such graduation in membership as shall allow the more developed to assume responsibility, and put themselves one step nearer to the full membership of the Christian church. Of course, organization is not everything, nor the principal thing. We cannot do much without it, but the most ideally perfect organization in the world must depend for its reputation upon those who use it. It will be urged as an objection by some who have had little or no experience in these matters, that it is requiring too much to ask a child to sign such a simple pledge as this:

"Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I purpose to try to do whatever he would like to have me do. I will pray to him, and read the Bible every day, and henceforth I will try to be his disciple."

Analyze it, and what do we find? Nothing at all inconsistent with that which is possible to the youngest disciple. A child can "trust"; a child can "try"; a child can "pray"; a child can "read the Bible"; a child can be a "disciple"—a learner. It is that from its constitution. Children like to be members of societies, and they are generally more faithful to their duties than are adults. They grow into right thoughts and right feelings, just as their seniors do, by right deeds. An adult church, with its loosely organized life, which has no regard to others than doctrinaire adults, seems to me, on its very face, to bear the record of its own heterodoxy. In every true church there is a natural parenthood. There is something inhuman in the elder not caring for the younger. True faith has an inherent tendency to propagate itself. No man can very firmly believe in that which does not develop activity in him. The first duty of a church is to provide for its own, "those of its own household." The idolatrous worship of freedom—as if freedom were anything but room for all good action—has tended to such relaxation of family discipline that the holiness of obedience seems no longer recognized; reverence is too much regarded as an ancient form of æsthetic for which we have now no special use. The welfare of our land would seem to depend more on our ability to bring the young into discipleship to Christ, and adults into a recognition that the church is the heart of the nation, than on almost aught else. If from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in every Christian home in the land, that all-sufficient book on this theme, Bushnell's "Christian Nurture," could be read and re-read, one might hope that a revival of interest in the godly training of children might, under God's Spirit, be brought about, and a new light flash out from the old text, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

VI

THE PASTOR AND THE COMMUNITY

IT was a scornful proverb of the middle ages that the human race was composed of men, women, and priests; as if a Christian minister were something other and less than a man. The successful pastor must, first of all, be a man. He has his native human relation, his responsibility to the community of which he is a member. He has no right to sink the man in the ecclesiastic. There are already too many who lose themselves in their business, over whose graves might be written words akin to the old French epitaph: "He was born a man, and died a grocer." But this is not the path by which the minister is to show himself an ensample of good works. He has no right to live in evasion of the primary fact that he is a citizen, a member of society, in common with all other men.

The usual argument against public spirit in a minister is that religion is so important and the preaching of it so exhaustive as to absolve the preacher from everything else. This was the excuse which used to be given why ministers should not engage in antislavery work, that they had more than they could really do if they confined themselves to the preaching of religion, and therefore ought not to go out into the "politics" of considering the moral character of the enslavement of one man by another. But the eye that could be so busy with distinctions of ritual and dogma as to fail to discover sin in slavery was at once too sharp-sighted and too blind. It reminds one of the eye-sight attributed to a noted politician, of whom it was said that he could see a fly on a barn-door two miles off and *not* see the door.

Even within the narrowest view, there is a natural reciprocity of interest to the advantage of which the pastor is entitled. He cannot better build his own specific work into the hearts of the public than by working for the public good. The kingdom of God is wider than any form of ecclesiasticism. People can be brought to see that religion is a power pervading every department of moral action. The distinction of secular from sacred, as it is often understood, is mischievous. To take part in a prayer-meeting may be no more of a sacred act than to take part in a caucus; and it may be much less so if the prayer-meeting is attended in the spirit often characterizing the caucus. Whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, are strictly objects of religious thought and effort; and an enlarged sympathy with all methods of building them into the life of a community lays the most solid foundation for building up a church. Doing good to all men brings in the special doing of good by all hands for the household of faith. But the refusal of good efforts for the public at large begets a general apathy to the specific form of goodness which is regarded as the special aim of the church pastor.

When some very zealous and active pastors are puzzled at the general coldness with which their efforts at church propagandism are met and defeated, they might wisely recall the coldness with which they have turned away from pleas for public services in behalf of the community at large, excusing themselves because their own church work occupied all their time and strength. A generous public spirit always brings a large public response. What is thus given will be given back, full measure, pressed down and heaped together.

A pastor takes energetic hold of a movement among the overworked salesmen of his town for shorter hours of toil, and, unexpectedly to himself, finds scores of young men and women in his evening services, listening to his words with new openness of attention and sympathy. A pastor stirs up the needs of a better school system, and makes himself a place in the hearts of hundreds of parents which no preaching would have given him. A pastor heads a movement for a public reading-room or library, a society for the wise and systematic relief of the poor, a town hospital, a reform in civic politics, or a plan of evening schools for working-boys — anything which shows that he is at work with all the people and for all the people; and he finds, years afterward, when an insidious attempt is made to dislodge him from his work, a large and unlooked-for reënforcement of public indignation in his behalf, which nullifies the attack and leaves him more firmly established than ever.

"I hear that there is some discontent with Mr. Blank on the part of a few in his society, and that he may have to leave your town," said one to a prominent man in one of our interior cities.

"Discontent!" was the reply. "I am not a member of Mr. Blank's congregation, but I know it through and through, and I know the city. I tell you it will come to nothing. Mr. Blank has done too much in our place for everybody to be unseated by anybody."

The talk occurred years ago, and that pastor is to-day doing a larger work in that city than ever.

Actions of public spirit pay. But if they are entered upon *because* they pay, they are not the actions of public spirit at all, and the public will be swift to see this. They must have their root in a genuine interest in the welfare of the community. This interest is really in the hearts of the vast majority of Christian ministers. But many of them do not see how to make it effective. They are afraid of making a mistake. Perhaps they have made mistakes, as who has not? The grooves of regular church work are uniform and easy, and in the line of all their training and experience. Anything beyond is an experiment. So they go on through years, in the face of public and social needs which they wish somebody would meet, but which they do not like to venture upon taking up. They remain discontented with themselves; they fail of becoming factors of power in the community; they fail to make full proof of their ministry in the church by the revulsion of the indifferentism toward it which they themselves practice beyond its borders, and to make any proof of that ministry in doing all good to all men.

On the other hand, very many pastors have a deep sense of the public calls upon them for leadership in every good work, and of the unused powers of their position. More of them than at any preceding day of Christian history are meeting these calls manfully and Christianly. There never was a time when the pastor was so much of a public man, and was so readily followed in his labors in behalf of the community at large, as to-day. The public objects in which pastors are the leaders and the methods pursued are innumerable.

Of course, no one method can be outlined as applicable to widely different fields and lines of service. The following general suggestions have been gathered from different quarters and offer hints from the experience of many pastors in carrying on this department of work.

First. Begin with the particular need which appeals most immediately to your thought. The providential demand for your service usually arises directly in your path. It is a mistake to go around it and beyond it for some other vague and large field of activity.

Second. Study the particular case thoroughly. Get at the more general problem which commonly underlies it. Know all that can be known about it before making any exposition of it to others. It is the greatest possible service that you should be able to answer all natural questions upon it, and give all the related facts in the earliest conferences held. Nothing awakens more respect than the knowledge that a careful and detailed investigation has been made of the matter proposed. Do not let those you call into conference go away with the feeling that you know next to nothing of what you have been talking about. Many a good work has been ruined in its very inception by the crass ignorance of the first proposer of it.

Third. To this end, you should familiarize yourself with the most accessible literature of the department to which the work belongs. A little careful reading may save crude and useless experiments. There is hardly any department of service for the community without a large published experience of endeavors wise and unwise. It is a very common thing to see schemes tried in social economics, relief of the poor, etc., which have long since been proved to be helpless and hopeless.

Fourth. Find out the few persons of largest influence who will be most likely to be in sympathy with the work, consult them, and enlist their counsel and coöperation first. It is not wise, usually, to propose your plan to them at once; but describe the case in its needs, get suggestions so far as they commend themselves to your thought, incorporate them in your own plan, awaken attention to both difficulties and promise; there will come a time when you can give your own ideas at the best possible advantage.

Fifth. Avoid settling upon a complete plan, and fastening yourself mentally to it, in advance of consultations. Carefully avoid any semblance of a dictatorial spirit. It is better to put into operation a very imperfect plan (as you esteem it), for which you can secure coöperation, than to resist it with a much more perfect plan which others are unready for. Arthur Helps wisely suggests, "It would not be a bad mode of preparing to organize anything, to state in writing what would be the perfection of the plan if it could be carried out; and then, by degrees, taking into consideration all the difficulties that occur, to fine down the project and bring it within the exact limits of what is practicable."

Sixth. Expect partial failures, vacillations, prejudices, reactions of coldness, hindrances, and obstacles of all kinds. No good movement was ever pushed through a community without a great deal of patience. Do not be misled by the first general declaration, "Everybody is in favor of it." It may be true; but it must usually be followed by a great deal of solid work.

A thoroughly public-spirited man, one who had done great service for his community in many and various beneficial efforts, once remarked that a person entering upon a work of public benevolence must be prepared to fight it through as if it were a project for the meanest personal aggrandizement, expecting all possible and many impossible misconstructions of his motives, expecting the most unlikely failures and aids, and be content at the end with the satisfaction of having done his duty. This was an over-statement; for this very man is recognized and appreciated by his townspeople as a public benefactor. But it is a mistake to imagine that even the best project will go of itself, or, indeed, will go at all, without constant and strenuous endeavor.

VI

HELPING THE PASTOR

I

COÖPERATION WITH THE PASTOR

A DISINTERESTED business man, versed in organization, looking over the field in which the churches are laboring to advance the principles of religion, if asked what could be done to increase the efficiency of those labors, would be likely first to suggest the need of a more cordial and active coöperation with the pastor in the work of the church.

There are, perhaps, in this country, about fifty thousand church organizations with pastors all laboring in sympathy with what are called the evangelical doctrines. These, together, form an immense army, and if each local organization were united and active, the aggregate moral power would be far greater than it now is. Probably the number of churches at any given time, whose influence is nullified or impaired by obstacles interposed by their own members, is very large.

Under all systems of church government, the pastor is the leader of the organization; and the first step to promote its strength is to coöperate with him.

There are cases, doubtless, in which the pastor is not suited for the place he occupies; but laying out of view the cases where there ought to be a change, let us consider that of the average parish — very likely your own parish. A good and faithful man — probably not the man you think you would have made had you been his creator — is fulfilling tolerably well the duties which form the routine of his office, and yet, perhaps, not making much of a mark upon the minds about him. A few of his parish have formed a strong personal attachment for him, a few don't like him, a good many more dislike something about him, or something he has said or done, while the great majority respect and esteem him as their pastor, without, however, taking any particular interest in what he does or counsels to be done. In such a condition as this a voluntary organization can exist, but can neither grow in itself nor gain an ascendency over those around it. But this is the condition into which thousands of evangelical churches come from time to time, and long remain. The first condition of producing greater power from the churches is securing more life; and in the average parish there is, perhaps, no better way for laymen to go about to secure more life in the church than cordially and heartily to coöperate with the pastor.

Unfortunately, the tendency is the other way; and when the pastor is wearied with long, unbroken work, or when the poverty of exhausted mental resources begins to appear in his sermons, or when, through the indifference of his people, he begins to be interested in other things than his work, or from the inadequacy of his support is obliged to labor in other ways to eke out a subsistence, then the average majority begin, half unconsciously, to stand a little aloof. The "best men" in his parish, as they call one another,— the most intellectual and social, — often lose their interest first, and leave him to himself soonest. The most sensitive natures set the example of turning away from him upon any act which is an error in judgment or in taste; and while, perhaps, they remain conscientiously faithful in every organized obligation, he loses, what is everything to him, the stimulus and the guidance which their sympathy would afford. How many a church has gradually suspended its forces, and laid aside its influence for a period, in such a process as this; and how many churches now are doing nothing in consequence of being in this condition.

In other organizations than the church, where men's material interests are affected by results, they learn to coöperate with each other in some things though they cannot in others. The same principle might well be applied by the parishioner who cannot approve all his minister does or says. Each can coöperate with the pastor in some point at least. The effect of such a course would be far greater than would be at first supposed. For instance, those who disapprove the pastor's spending so much time in visiting, and think he ought to spend more time in his study, can do something to promote the attractiveness of his study, and to increase the resources of his library. Ten dollars spent in early copies of a few fresh books, such as the preacher prizes, or fifty spent in sending him to the meeting of the American Board, or the Evangelical Alliance, will do more to promote his pulpit efforts than a great deal of acute criticism expressed confidentially to other people. Those who are not wholly in accord with the doctrine he teaches surely approve his visiting the sick and the poor. Dissatisfaction with sermons need not prevent one from inquiring after the suffering ones to whom he is ministering, and seeing to it that he has all necessary supplies, and even a companion occasionally, in that work. It might prove, too, that entering into his sympathies here would infuse a new degree of humanity and spirituality into his sermons. Stranger things than that have happened. Even when the pastor has felt moved to make an extraordinary onslaught upon Darwin and science, the skeptical and acute-minded physician who, perhaps, sees farther into that mill-stone than any one else in the parish, need not on account of that sermon condemn the pastor for acting as a member of the district school-board; and if he cannot conscientiously (for science has its conscience as well as theology) subscribe any longer "for the support of the Gospel," he can give the like sum to forward the pastor's labors in the promotion of education.

It may be objected that indiscriminate coöperation in every movement which a pastor, even if the wisest of men, might propose, would be unwise, and might tend to scatter and diffuse the energies which should be concentrated; and this is undoubtedly true. But that is a very different thing from aiding the pastor, in whatever part of the actual work in hand commends itself as most useful and most promising. The illustrations that have been mentioned are but instances of a general principle, universally applicable, that those who are interested in the success of an organization can promote it by promoting such parts of its movement as they most approve, without holding themselves responsible for the deficiencies of other parts. The case must be bad indeed where every unsatisfied or uninterested member of a church will not find something in which his aid is due to his pastor, or where a pastor so assisted on every hand would find his people long dissatisfied or uninterested. The work would prosper, and success itself engenders satisfaction. Happy are they who, like many of us, can say to their pastors, "Under *your* direction, we are ready to labor in any department."

The remarks above made apply equally to the office bearers of the church and all the departments of its work.

No small part of the friction which is often observed in the administration of the affairs of a church is due to the fact that what people approve they rarely speak of: while things go well, they take all as a matter of course; hence an expression of judgment is only called out by an occasion for fault-finding. Commendation has no voice; and however many are satisfied, no one is heard but those who are dissatisfied. Those who administer affairs need the guidance and pressure of a recognition of that which gives satisfaction quite as much as the checks and stops of criticism. A critical church may be compared to a horse-car with one horse and forty brakes, in which it should be made the privilege and duty of every passenger to brake-up whenever he thought anything was likely to go wrong. The minister tugs his load along, incessantly brought to a stand, unless his is a powerful nature, by the objections, tacit or expressed, of any timid or fastidious parishioner who fears a collision or fancies a danger.

A prevalence of the spirit in which each one endeavors to assist whatever movement commends itself to his judgment, leaving all minor errors to correct themselves, will soon elevate the pastor to his true position, unite the hearts of the people in sympathy, and bring a languid church up to vigor and usefulness.

Two obstacles to the application of the principle we have considered should not be overlooked. (1) Men of affairs, who are accustomed to control all details, do not find it easy to serve an organization where some things are not to their liking. It is hard, especially for a successful man who has just the qualities that a church needs, to take up with a subordinate department or position, and hold in silence his opinion on other matters that he cannot mend. It is only the cause of the Master and the highest welfare of fellow-men that can enlist such service. These deserve it and demand it. (2) It is often hard for a pastor gracefully to accept the well-meant coöperation of others. He is surely not to blame for preferring to go his own way, if the parish have, by long inactivity, compelled him to adapt himself and his habits to this method; and if a pastor would be and remain but an individual missionary, no change is necessary. But if he would build up and *administer* an organization which shall multiply his influence in every direction, the methods of enlisting and coördinating the active interest of others must be studied.

II

THE HELPFULNESS OF HEARING

THERE is considerable difference among the theories of the various churches as to the nature of church government. Some of these theories assign to the pastor more power than others concede to him; some of them give the people a larger place in the government of the church than others do; but the practical differences are much less than the theoretical. In all our Protestant churches there are leaders, to whom is given the responsibility of organizing and directing the work; and in all these churches the duty of the members to coöperate with their leaders in carrying on the work is clearly understood. The pastor is always expected to be a leader, and the people, in their theories, acknowledge their obligation to support him. They may deny that he has authority over them; but they admit that, by counsel and suggestion, he is to guide them in their united efforts to do good.

It is evident that every organization which proposes any definite work must have a leader; and that it will be necessary for its members to lay aside many of their own preferences, and join to carry out the plans of the leader. If he is incapable of leadership he ought to be deposed, and his place filled by one who can lead. So long as he is at the head of the enterprise he ought to be supported. Loyalty to the organization involves loyalty to the leader. This is just as true of a church as of a regiment.

It may be said that many ministers appear to desire no assistance; they go forward with their work, without calling on their parishioners to coöperate with them; they seem to expect to do about all that is done in the parish. Probably this is the result of repeated failures to secure such assistance. They may have found it easier to do the work themselves than to get others to do it. Perhaps the discovery among their parishioners of a willingness to help would lead them to modify their methods.

But it is manifestly impossible for one man to do all the Christian work that ought to be done in an ordinary parish; and it is equally manifest that if the pastor could do it all, the people cannot afford to allow him to do it. For their own sakes they need to engage constantly and heartily in the labors for which the church is organized. And it is a curious sort of Christian who can sit down contentedly in the midst of the work that waits everywhere to be done for Christ and humanity, and find in his heart no impulse to engage in it.

Whatever, therefore, the habits or expectations of the pastor may be, the people of the church, if they have even the faintest apprehension of the real meaning of church-membership, will themselves have a mind to work, and will insist on finding ways of working.

The remark may be trite, but its truth is not yet sufficiently impressed upon the minds of all church-members, that one effective way of helping the pastor is to attend faithfully the regular meetings of the church — the Sunday services, the prayer-meetings, the Sunday-school sessions, all the assemblies in which the people meet for work or worship. Even those who take no part in such services are helping if they "assist," in the French sense of the word, by being present. The pastor will preach more effectively if the seats are full. No matter how devout and spiritual he may be, he cannot help being influenced by such conditions. A large congregation rouses and inspires him. It is not merely the encouragement that he feels on account of the presence of numbers; the congregation itself is almost sure to be in a more receptive mood if the house is well filled. A large congregation is generally alert, expectant, impressible; it listens more sympathetically and more responsively than a small congregation. The pastor knows and feels this; it is a call upon him for his best service; it rouses and kindles him; his sermon is more effective. A sermon preached to a large congregation not only does more good because more persons hear it, but also because each person who does hear it is apt to be far more impressed by the truth of it than if he had heard it in a sparse and cold assembly.

Many church-members seem to suppose that the reason for going to church is simply to be taught and inspired; and that, if one does not feel like going, the loss is all his own. But this is far from being true. You go to church not only for the good you can get, but for the good you can do. You go to help to kindle, by your presence, in the great congregation, that flame of sacred love which makes the souls of those who listen sensitive and mobile under the touch of the truth. You go to help others to listen; to help to create the conditions under which they can listen well. You go to help the minister preach; to add vitality and warmth and convincing power to his words. Good preaching cannot be produced by one man; it is the fruit of the combined power of an inspired preacher and an inspired congregation, acting upon each other. If the people fail to supply their part of the power, the work of the minister will be much less effectually done.

If the people of the church generally stay away from the preaching services, or from any of them, those who come in naturally infer that the church-members do not highly value these services. Their habitual absence disparages the minister's work. But, even if the outsiders should not draw this inference, they will certainly fail to receive that positive spiritual influence which the presence of the church-members in large force would be likely to impart. The fact that the members of the church can do so much by their presence in the sanctuary to make the preaching of the Word effective, and the service of the Lord's house impressive and useful to all those who come, is a fact that should be well considered before devoting the best part of Sunday to ease and recreation.

What has been said of the Sunday services is even more true of the social meetings for conference and worship. For exactly the same reasons a large attendance at the prayer-meeting kindles the interest and increases the usefulness of the meeting. This is not because of any unspiritual reliance upon numbers or external helps; it is the working of a law of mind which anybody can understand. True it is that God *can* work by few as well as by many—that is to say, he can work miracles; but he does not encourage us to expect that he will work miracles. He means that we shall understand

and conform to the laws which he has impressed on our own natures. The law of his working is to accomplish more by many than by few. According to the ordinary methods of his grace, we should say that more spiritual power would be found in an assembly of two hundred disciples than in an assembly of one hundred. And just as ten fagots will make a fire more than ten times hotter than one fagot, so the increase of numbers in an assembly of worshipers more than proportionately increases the fervor and enthusiasm of those assembled. The leader of the meeting, who is generally the pastor, always feels this influence, and the earnestness thus awakened in him will be reflected upon the meeting.

Much satire has been expended upon those who regard church-going as an important Christian duty. The ridicule is somewhat misplaced. The Christian whose religion is summed up in church attendance is, indeed, a defective type; nevertheless, the old-fashioned duty of going to meeting is duty still, and an important duty. It is not purely for his own edification that the intelligent Christian visits the house of God, but quite as much for the support and encouragement and inspiration that may be imparted to others by his presence, and by his participation in the worship. And this is a service that can be rendered by many who feel themselves incapable of teaching in the Sunday-school or of testifying in the prayer-room. If all those who have the power would be faithful and conscientious in their attendance upon the services of the church, showing thus by their constant presence in its assemblies their interest in its work and its worship, many a weary pastor would find his hands strengthened and his heart lightened.

III

THE DUTY OF TAKING OFFICE

THE duty of accepting office needs to be urged upon capable and honest Americans. As a general rule, the people who want the political offices are not fit to hold them, and the people who have the requisite qualifications cannot be persuaded to take them. This is the disease of our politics — a disease that threatens the life of the nation. It cannot be cured by simply shutting out the unfit; it is equally necessary that the responsibilities of power be accepted by the fit. It is comparatively easy to keep bad men out of office, when we can find good men who are ready to take office. The capable, the trusty, are all the while saying, "I pray thee have me excused." They are too busy with their own concerns to give much time to the state. It is a serious question how long the nation can endure this infidelity of its citizens to their highest trust. The conduct of the great majority of our reputable citizens deserves no softer name than treachery. Uniformly to repudiate these solemn responsibilities, habitually to shirk these sacred duties, is a breach of trust for which no condemnation can be too severe. If it is the duty of all to vote for the best men, it must be the duty of the best men to stand and be voted for.

"It would involve a great sacrifice," says the reputable citizen, when his neighbors ask him to take an important office. "My business would suffer; I cannot afford it." Of course it would involve sacrifice. Undoubtedly your business would suffer. But how happen you to be exempt from the obligations of sacrifice, which are inseparable from citizenship? Are there no sacrifices to be made for the state except in war time? Your business might take some detriment while you were serving the state; but what will happen if you, and all such as you, insist on setting the claims of business above the obligations of citizenship? The civil order will be undermined by fraud and maladministration, and your business will have no foundations to rest upon. We are coming to this in many quarters much more rapidly than our reputable citizens think. Partisan courts and venal legislatures and villainous city councils are combining to hasten the day when no man's property will be of much value. And that day, when it comes, will be the natural fruit of the doings of those reputable citizens who have shirked their political obligations, and have left the management of politics to those who regard the offices as spoils.

In the church, the difficulty of filling the offices with the best men is much less troublesome than in the state. In the church, the vicious notion that the office is booty does not largely obtain. It is generally understood that office is a trust; and the best men are always more ready to assume burdens than to contend for prizes. Nevertheless, there is often some embarrassment in filling the responsible offices of the church with the best men. The same reasons that hinder respectable citizens from taking political office often operate to dissuade church-members of character and ability from taking the official places in the church. The offices of deacon, of elder, of warden, of vestryman, of trustee, of treasurer, of steward, of Sunday-school superintendent, often go begging. The men who are best qualified to take these offices are, they say, so busy that they cannot attend to them. But what right has a man to be so busy that he cannot do his duty? A curse must ever rest on that pursuit of secular advantages which disables a man from seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. If the church is to be maintained and its work is to be efficiently prosecuted, the management of its affairs must be assumed by men of energy and experience and sagacity; it is through their consecrated powers that its interests will be promoted. Is that church likely to achieve great results in which the ablest men devote all their energies to business and professional life, and leave the leadership of spiritual affairs to those of second-rate ability? Is the service of Mammon to monopolize the strong men of the churches, and the service of God to be committed to the weak and unskillful?

The pressure of business is not the only excuse of those who refuse to take responsible positions in the church. A morbid modesty restrains many. They will not undertake these duties because they fear that they should not make a good figure in their performance. Not a little silly vanity mingles with this reluctance. When you are called to such responsibilities by those in authority, it is generally safe to consent. Their judgment of your ability is not, probably, at fault. At any rate, when they put the burden upon you, it is the manly and the Christian thing to take it up without complaints or apologies and bear it as best you can. If they have made a mistake in selecting you, it is their fault, not yours. The duty has come to you unsought; it is not for you to reason that somebody else could perform it more gracefully or more efficiently. Nobody else can do your duty.

Nothing is more embarrassing to the pastor of a church than to find among its members a chronic disposition to shirk office and responsibility; to refuse to act upon committees; to decline, whenever they are elected, in favor of somebody else. The annual meeting of the church or the parish is often, for this cause, a day of great discouragement to him. And nothing helps him more effectually than the knowledge that there is among the people a readiness to assume, without questioning, such tasks as may be assigned to them.

IV

PARISH VISITING

THE people often discuss the duty of the pastor to visit his parishioners, and find much fault with him when he fails in the performance of this duty; but is the pastor the only member of the church on whom this obligation rests? Is it not quite as much the duty of the people to be courteous one to another, as of the pastor to show kindness to all? Do not the obligations of fellowship, expressed or implied, when members are received into the church, include the manifestation to one another of neighborly kindness, and the cultivation of acquaintance — at least among those who live in the same neighborhood? Has any member of the church who has failed in this duty toward his fellow-members the right to complain of his pastor for having failed in this duty to him?

Doubtless the pastor will gladly visit his people in their own homes as often as he is able to do so. The opportunity of becoming acquainted with them in this way will be prized by him. But the pastor of a congregation numbering two or three hundred families finds it difficult to make frequent calls. In a congregation as large as this, those who are sick and in trouble, and those who for other reasons have need of his friendship, will take most of the time that he can give to work of this nature. In his studies, in his pulpit preparations, in his multifarious duties of administration, and in the public services of various sorts required of him the pastor's days are consumed; it is not possible for him to devote any large portion of his time to general visitation. Most of the hours that he can save for this purpose he must give to those who have special claims on his sympathy and care. If much of this kind of work is done in the larger churches, the people themselves must do it.

For many reasons it is better that the people themselves should do this work than that it should be done by the pastor. The pastor's call is perfunctory. He goes because it is his duty to go. It is well if he has the grace to conceal this disagreeable fact; but many of those on whom he calls must be aware that it is an official service, and does not possess any social significance. A friendly call from one of the members of the church might wear a different look. It would almost uniformly be accepted as an act of friendship; it would manifest the fellowship of the church more clearly than a call from the pastor.

It is desirable that the several ties which bind members to the church be as strong as those which bind them to their pastor. Those who join the church, and not the pastor, should be received by the church at least as heartily as by the pastor. Pastors come and go, but the church abides; and it is of the utmost importance that the attachment of each member be fastened upon the church, and not merely upon its minister. To this end some means should be provided of promoting acquaintance and neighborly intercourse among the members of the churches.

At one of the churches of the disciples who call themselves "Christians," I was present one day when, according to the custom of the church, a lady presented her letter at the close of the morning service, and was received to membership, the pastor extending to her, on behalf of the brotherhood, the right hand of fellowship. When this simple rite had been performed, the pastor gave, distinctly, once or twice, the name and residence of the lady thus received. "We all know," he said, "that in a congregation like ours, widely scattered over a large city, it is not possible for all the members to be on terms of neighborly intimacy; but it is possible for those in the same part of the city to know one another, and I hope that those who reside in the neighborhood of our sister will take an early opportunity of calling upon her in her home, and presenting to her their Christian greetings." There are, doubtless, congregations in which such a recognition of the fraternal relations of members would not be possible; in which the members would resent the suggestion that they owe any courtesies to one another simply because they belong to the same church and live in the same neighborhood; in which the barriers of social reserve and exclusiveness are far too high and strong to admit of any genuine brotherhood; but people of this class, though they may call themselves Christians, are not Christians at all; they are pagans; and the counsels of this book are not intended for them.

In churches which recognize a fraternal relation among their members, and desire to promote and strengthen it, a convenient device is the division of the parish into a number of well-defined geographical districts, each of which should be placed in charge of a pastoral committee, consisting perhaps of one gentleman and three ladies. The directory of the church should be printed, with the boundaries of each district distinctly defined, and the names and residences of families and individuals residing within the district brought together. The members of the congregation can thus see at a glance who their neighbors are, and where they live; and they can, if they desire, show themselves neighborly to those within their reach. The pastoral committee should visit every family in its district at least once a year, and should report to the pastor any changes of residence in the district, and any removals from it, with the names of new-comers within their territory who are attending the church.

Such a division of the parish into geographical districts, with a pastoral committee in charge of each, is a convenient arrangement for many purposes. It is necessary to canvass the parish from time to time for various objects; this machinery provides a way whereby every family can be expeditiously and surely reached. In some churches the benevolent collections are thus taken with but little labor. Cottage meetings may also be held occasionally in the several districts under the direction of the pastoral committees.

The chief value of the geographical division is, however, the aid which it affords in the cultivation of church fellowship by grouping the members of the congregation. By means of such a system, it is possible for those belonging to the same church to fulfill their fraternal obligations to one another, and to foster that sentiment and spirit of brotherhood on which the usefulness of the church so largely depends.

V

DROPPED STITCHES

THERE are quite a number of small matters in which, by the exercise of a proper thoughtfulness, the people may greatly aid their pastor. No small share of the time and strength of the minister of a large church is consumed in attention to petty details, of which he might be relieved if the people had a mind to relieve him. Not a little of his work is the direct result of their neglect and carelessness. Not a few of his failures in service might be avoided if they would coöperate with him, in ways which would involve little labor on their part.

It would be a simple matter, for example, to notify your minister when you change your residence, that he may make the needful correction on his calling list and know where to find you. A postal card, costing one cent, and which you could inscribe and direct in less than one minute, would convey to him this information. Yet, I have often spent hours in hunting up families or individuals who had changed their residence without giving me any notice whatever. Indeed, in my experience of twenty-five years as a pastor, I have found very few persons who were thoughtful enough to give the minister this information, even when their attention had been repeatedly called to the matter from the pulpit. When a minister travels all the way to Dan in search of a parishioner and finds that the parishioner, without mentioning the matter to him, has removed to Beersheba, it does not put him in a good humor; especially if, as is often the case, he was in Beersheba the day before, and might, if he had known it, have made this call by walking a square or two. I have frequently traveled from two to six miles to make a call that I might have made by traveling a few rods. And it would have been such a simple matter for these perambulating parishioners to have saved me all this trouble!

Very often church-members remove from the city to distant places without giving their pastor notice. Within the past three months I have devoted considerable time to searching for a missing family, and at last, six months after their departure, I learned that they were in Kansas. Not a few of the absentees on the rolls of our churches have behaved in this way, and we are now wholly unable to trace them. This is not only a great annoyance and trouble to the pastor; it is a gross breach of their church covenant.

Families are sometimes in sore trouble, through sickness or other calamity, and the minister never finds it out. They do not give him notice, and he fails, from no fault of his own, to visit them in their time of need. It would have been easy for them to call him, and he would have answered their summons most gladly. Yet such persons sometimes cherish umbrage toward their pastor because he has not rendered them a service which they gave him no chance to render. The faithful pastor regrets every such failure. The people who are in trouble are the people whom he desires to see. And if, in the moment of their anxiety or their sorrow, they will reflect that their pastor is not omniscient, and will let him know that they would be glad to see him, they will do him a great favor.

Members of the church might aid the pastor greatly by taking pains to make the acquaintance of new-comers in the congregation, or in the neighborhood, who seem disposed to connect themselves with the church, and by furnishing the pastor with their names and places of residence. With all such strangers he desires to become acquainted, and it is often difficult for him to find out who they are, or to put himself in communication with them. Those who sit near them in church and offer them the courtesies of the sanctuary can easily make their acquaintance, and learn whether or not they would be pleased to receive a call from the pastor.

One of the most unsatisfactory and slovenly departments of the life of many of our churches is that which relates to absent members. In most of our churches the number of absentees is large, often amounting to an eighth or a tenth of the entire membership. Some of these are only temporarily absent; some of them have gone away without notifying the pastor of their departure; some have been absent for years. Over these absent members the church exercises little care. Many of them fall into neglectful and irreligious ways, and have no desire to renew their church relations. It seems highly important that some means of communication be established between the church and these absentees, and the work may well be undertaken by the members of the church. A careful list should be made out, with the residences of those absent, so far as known; and this list should be taken in charge by the clerk, or by some member of the church who volunteers to perform this service. The list should be read at some well-attended social meeting, that those present may correct and complete it, if they happen to know the whereabouts of any of the absent ones. Then these names should be parceled out for correspondence among the members of the church present, giving to each correspondent but few names; and each one should write regularly, say once in six months, to those assigned to him, explaining to each that he writes in the name of the church, to convey its greetings to its absent communicant, to give him information of the work that is going on at home, and to inquire after his welfare. A friendly letter of this sort, expressing the interest of the church in these members now beyond its sight, and gently reminding them of their covenant relations, will prove very helpful to many of them. The fact that they are remembered and cared for in their absence will touch many of them deeply; and those that had grown remiss and wayward will often be called back to better ways by such a friendly word.

If the residence of any absent member is not known, it should be the duty of the person to whom the name is assigned to find it out. The pastor or other persons may furnish clews to the investigation, but the work of making the investigation should be left to the correspondent himself. All discoveries of this nature, and all changes of residence, should be reported by the correspondents to the clerk, or the person who keeps the list of absentees, that this list may be as full and as accurate as possible. To those who expect to be permanently absent, the suggestion may properly be made, not by the correspondent, but by some official communication from the church, that it would be better for them, if it be convenient, to remove their relation to some church near them, with which they may engage in work and in worship.

This work of keeping the lines of communication open between the church and its absent members will be found, in most cases, pleasant and profitable. The answers that will come from many of them will be grateful and hearty, and some opportunity should be found of reading these responses, or such portions of them as may be properly read in public, at some social meeting of the church. The fellowship meeting, of which a subsequent section will treat, would afford such an opportunity. By this care of the absentees, the pastor would have one of his anxieties removed, and one of the loose ends of the church administration neatly picked up and secured.

There are many other ways in which a vigilant church may assist its leader in carrying on his work. In every large parish there is a great deal of clerical work to do,—reports to make out, circulars to direct, membership lists to revise,—in all of which the pastor might receive much assistance, if his people were ready to help him. And they will find it greatly to their account to relieve him, so far as they can, of this kind of labor, that he may give himself more fully to the weightier studies and services of his calling.

VI

SEXTONS

THERE are sextons and sextons — from the modest man who attends quietly to his own business, all the way up to him who magnifies his office and carries himself as if he were Lord Chamberlain. To be a doorkeeper in the house of God is indeed an honorable vocation, but that is no reason why the one filling it should drive people from the church in disgust at his high and mighty airs.

Of the extent to which the comfort of church-goers is dependent on this functionary, few are aware. The *seating*, indeed, which used to be his special charge, is now in many churches attended to by ushers, and with decided advantages. But where the old custom still prevails, this official, in addition to his other duties, acts as a kind of host. Thus it depends much on him whether those entering the Lord's house are made to feel at home, or are rendered more or less uncomfortable.

After the death of a far-famed, aristocratic city sexton, one of the secular papers spoke of him as having "gone to a place where seats are not given out according to the quality of the clothes worn by the applicant." A religious journal pronounces this a "ghastly sarcasm, yet so well deserved in many places that it may well be tolerated for the lesson it teaches."

"The sexton," says Dr. John Hall, "should be a genial, quiet, sensible man, and, if possible, entirely in sympathy with the pastor and his work. He should be prompt and ready. A great deal of good or harm may be done by the way people are shown to their seats."

The office of this official is no sinecure. The church is to be kept in good order, which involves a careful looking after windows and doors, pulpits, pews, and aisles. Then there are stoves and furnaces to be regulated, and everybody knows how fitfully and how unwisely this is sometimes done. On a cold winter's day, when the thermometer is scarcely above zero, and the winds come whistling in at every window, one will sometimes sit and shiver through the services. Then in some January thaw, the church will, perhaps, be oppressively hot. In all this the sexton has the chief responsibility, as also for slamming blinds and creaking doors.

Just so in the vestry or chapel. Foul air, or a temperature too hot or too cold, or smoking lamps, or a broken pane of glass — what an amount of discomfort follows any one of these annoyances! And sometimes we have several of them at the same time! People grow sleepy and nod their assent to the sleepy speaker, or they sneeze and shiver and cough, and wish they had n't come. Thus, instead of a means of grace, the service is very likely the means of a cold, both physically and spiritually.

Sometimes, on the Sabbath, at the very time a hymn is being sung, and indeed, as if that were the particular opportunity he had been waiting for, the sexton will ascend the pulpit stairs with a pile of notices in his hands to thrust before the minister's eyes. Whatever needs attention, whether arranging for ventilation, or opening or shutting windows, or whispering to this one or to that one, this is the time chosen, as if the singing were designed as a sort of drapery to cover all such performances.

Bishop Huntington writes:

> "The most perfect sexton I ever saw was an apostle of silence. His eye and ear and hand were everywhere, and his genius for forestalling and suppressing confusion was wonderful. Before service he always changed his boots for slippers. He glided about the aisles as noiselessly as a ghost. He made doorkeeping a fine art. Doors and windows were fixed so that they would never be heard. He took care that no sound should come from the furnace or gas fixtures after the service began. The fact was that this was not a mere instinct of propriety or crafty measure of success in his office; it was a constant answer of his believing and humble heart to the solemn sentence, 'The Lord is in his holy temple.' What a contrast to the clumsy, fussy, heavy-shod brother in charge of the stoves in a rural sanctuary I remember, who was sure to start up two or three times in the midst of prayers, sometimes when the preacher was doing his best to get or hold the attention of his hearers, march around from his seat to the fire, swing open

> a stridulous stove door, punch the sticks with a poker, and toss in an additional supply of fuel, giving us another shrill screech from the hinges as a *finale*."

But of all the matters claiming this functionary's attention, that of ventilation is supreme. How often are the most fervent prayers and the most eloquent sermons wasted on an assembly oppressed and stultified by a stifling and noxious air! A judge once complained that for lack of fresh air "our court-rooms were killing the judges and disturbing the course of justice." Are these conditions any less harmful in our churches? If the preacher would reach the hearts of his hearers, nay, if his own heart is to be alive and glowing, there must be a supply of the vital element. Unless there can be a constant inflowing of pure air, he might as well stop preaching. Yet who has not often seen the sexton, after the congregation has left the church, carefully closing every door and window, as if anxious to shut in so many feet of square poison? And this, often, in spite of the specific and repeated injunction of the pastor to open instead of shut.

The moment the people are out, everything should be set wide open. And there should be another airing and revivifying before the assembly again gathers. To secure thorough ventilation, it must be line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a great deal. Let there be no cessation in this warfare till victory is achieved.

Bishop Simpson writes:

> "The principles of ventilation are generally but poorly understood by sextons. They usually confound warm air with pure air, and keep the rooms closed, to have them warm. The interest of many a service is destroyed by this means. People wonder what is the matter with their preacher and with themselves. They have no life, no enthusiasm. They cannot have any when their lungs are loaded with impure exhalations and their brains oppressed with imperfectly oxygenated blood. I believe that the health of many a minister suffers severely and his life is shortened in consequence of breathing impure air. I wish we could have an art school for sextons (if it were only possible to get them together), or a course of lectures, or a good manual to guide them in their duties. Some of them are intelligent and skillful and worthy of praise; but too many, especially in small churches, are grossly ignorant.

> "A ministerial friend once related to me a scene he had witnessed. A church in a country place had been enlarged and repaired, and the opening services were about to be held, at which he was invited to officiate. The trustees had bought a thermometer, and charged the sexton that the temperature must be kept between 60 and 70; but in no case must it get higher than 70. The day was a little cool, and the minister noticed the sexton examining the thermometer, which hung against a column. Then he put wood in the stove. In a few minutes he examined the thermometer again, and put more wood in the stove; after which he examined it again, and seemed to be in trouble. He opened the stove-door, looked again, scratched his head; and, finally, as if a sudden thought struck him, he seized the thermometer with both hands and ran out-of-doors into the cold air, determined to bring it down to 70."

One evening, a gentleman suffered so much from cold feet in church that after service he spoke of it to the sexton, who admitted that many had complained of the same thing; but that he could not understand it, as they had large fires. He then pointed to a register near the gentleman, that he might see there was a hot fire in the furnace, though no heat came up. A handkerchief laid over the register hardly stirred. The visitor inquired if there was any ventilation. "No, sir." "Are there no windows open?" "None whatever." "How, then, can you expect the air to come in here if it can't get out somewhere?" The man was nonplused. "Did you ever try to blow into a bottle?" continued the inquirer. "No, sir." "Do you think, if you did, that you could force out any more air from a bottle by blowing than was in it before?" He could n't say. Never had thought of it. "Well," continued the gentleman, "you would soon find, if you tried, that it was impossible, and neither can you force air into this church through a register, if you don't open a window or some other orifice." "But," the sexton demurred, "opening the window would let in the cold air, would n't it?" "You just try it," was the response. "Raise some of the windows on the leeward side of the church, and see what will happen." It was done, and instantly the handkerchief lying on the register rose half-way to the ceiling with the force of the ascending current. The sexton stared in astonishment.

Why is it that women are never appointed to the office of sexton? In sweeping and dusting, in looking after the corners and cornices and crevices, is not woman more of an adept than man? Give them each a disordered or a dismantled room to put in order, and compare the results. At any rate, why not appoint a man and his wife as a sort of double sexton, committing the nicer work and the finishing touches to her?

As to the matter of ventilation, a woman's wits could hardly be duller than that of the man Bishop Simpson refers to. Certainly some way should be contrived to keep the air pure and fresh, and that without exposing people to draughts. Sometimes a single pane in the window is arranged so that it can be opened as occasion requires, and thus, with the blind closed, a good supply of oxygen be secured. Sometimes the window is slightly raised, while a piece of board or a cleat is placed under the lower sash, so as to admit air without a direct current. As a means of insuring the proper temperature and also purity of air, every church should be supplied with a thermometer, barometer, and anemometer.

But however excellent may be the arrangements, unless the official in charge is competent for his place, they are worse than wasted. I have in mind a church edifice that is provided with the best methods of ventilation. They might, however, just as well have been omitted, as no use whatever is made of them.

In explaining to an American gentleman the apparatus for ventilation under the Houses of Parliament, the chief engineer remarked: "After all, the perfection is in the fact that my assistants have been here for years, and know how to regulate air and temperature according to the indications of outdoor air and indoor circumstances. I sometimes find," added he, "that when debate is most excited in the House of Commons, it is safe to let in quantities of air that would be quite criticised in the moments of calm stolidity over a long-drawn, uninteresting speech."

I cannot better emphasize this point than with the "Appeal to a Sexton," which every few years goes the rounds of the papers. While the occasion for it is as great as ever, no one can complain of its reiteration.

A APELE FOR ARE: 2 THE SEXTANT OF THE OLD BRICK MEETIN'OUSE.

BY A GASPER.

O, Sextant of the meetin'ouse, which sweeps
And dusts, or is supposed to! and makes fires
And lites the gass, and sometimes leaves a scru loose,
In which case it smels orful — wus nor lam-pile:
And wrings the bel, and toles it wen men dyes,
To the grief of surviven pardners; & sweeps paths;
And for these services gits $100 per annum,
Wich them that thinks deer, let them tri it;
Getin up before star-lite in all wethers, and
Kindlin' fires when the wether is as cold
As Nero, and like as not green wood for kindlins:
I wouldn't be hired to do it for no some.
But O, Sextant! there are 1 kermoddity
Worth more than gold, which doan't cost nothink —
Worth more than anythink except the sole of Mann;—
I meen pewer are, Sextant; I meen pewer are!
O, it is plenty out o' doors, so plenty it doan't no
Whot on airth to do with itself, but flies about
Scatterin' leaves and blowin' off men's hatts;
In short, it 's jest "as free as are" out-dores.
But O, Sextant, in our cherch it 's as scarce as piety,
Scarce as bankbills when ajunts beg for mishins,
Wich sum say is purty often ('tain't nothin' to mee;
Wot I give aint nothin' to nobody); but O, Sextant,
U shet 500 men, wimin & children,
Speshaly the latter, up in a tite place.
Sum has bad breths, none aint 2 sweet,
Sum is fevery, sum is scroflous, sum has bad teeth,
An some haint none, & some aint over clean:
But 1 of em brethes in and out, and out and in,
Say 50 times a minit, or 1 million & a half breths an our.
Now how long will a cherch ful of are last at that rate?
I ask you. Say 15 minits, and then wots to be did?
Why then they mus brethe it all over agin,
And then they mus brethe it all over agin,
And then agin, & so on till each has took it down
At least 10 times, & let it up agin. And wots more,
The same individdible doan't have the privilege
Of breathin' his own are and no one's else;
Each one must take whatever comes to him.
O, Sextant, doan't you know our lunks is bellussess,

To blo' the fier of life and keep it from
Going out; & how can bellussess blo without wind?
And ain't wind ARE? I put it to your conshens.
Are is same to us as milk to babies,
Or water is to fish, or pendulum to clox,
Or roots & airbs unto an injun Doctor,
Or little pills unto an omepath,
Or boys to girls. Are is for us to breethe;
Wot signifies who preeches if I can't breeth?
Wots Pol, wots Polus to sinners who are ded,
Ded for want of breth? Why, Sextant, when we dye,
It 's only coz we can't breethe no more — that's all.
And now, O Sextant, let me beg of you
2 let a little are inter our cherch,
(Pewer are is serting propper for the pews,)
And do it week days, and on Sundays too.
It aint much truble — only make a hoal,
And all the are will cum of itself.
It luves to cum in were it can get warm.
And O how it will rouse the peple up,
And spirit up the preecher, and stop gapes
And yauns & fijjitts, as effectual
As wind on the dry Boans the Profit talks
Of.

VII

THE PEOPLE AT WORK

I

HOW TO BEGIN CHURCH WORK

THE way to begin is to join the church. As soon as one has begun the Christian life, he ought to connect himself with the Christian church. Belonging to Christ involves belonging to the body of which Christ is the head. He who has said to Jesus Christ, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and has listened for the answer to that question, has not failed to hear the command: "Confess me before men and be numbered among my disciples." Some questions of Christian obligation are hard to solve, but this is not one of them. Some duties are beyond the power of some disciples; this duty rests on every one. Belonging to the church invisible is not enough. We must belong to the visible church; we must stand up and be counted. Christ has established on the earth a visible organization. By this the sacraments are administered, the ministry of the Word is promoted, the work of evangelizing the world is done. Into this all believers are called; not merely some believers, but all believers. Is there any hint, anywhere in the New Testament, that any class or kind of disciples is excused from membership in the Christian church? It is not for old disciples any more than it is for young ones; it is not for the strong any more than for the weak; it is not for the perfect so much as for the imperfect; it is not for those whose salvation is accomplished;

it is for those that are *being* saved. Read the last verse of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles in the Revised Version, and see who were added to the church in the Pentecostal days. Those who were "*being* saved." The work of salvation was going on in them, but it had only just begun. It began when they surrendered themselves to Jesus Christ—owning him as Master and Lord; and just as soon as they made this surrender to him they were baptized into his name. They were far from being perfect Christians. They were full of errors and inconsistencies and defects; but they had given themselves to Jesus Christ, and the disciples took them into the church by thousands. They came in because they were ignorant; the church was the place appointed for their instruction. They came in because their lives were inconsistent and defective, that they might be guided into the ways of integrity and trained for a worthy service. There is no other place for one who has begun to follow Christ except the church of Christ. He belongs there, just as much as a soldier belongs in an army; just as much as a child belongs in his father's house. He is out of his place if he is out of the church. He has no right to be outside. It is a privilege for a follower of Christ to join the church, in just the same sense that it is his privilege to speak truth or to do righteousness. It is his privilege, but it is his bounden duty also; if he neglects it, he is not doing what Christ would have him do.

"But there are many churches—which shall I join?" That is largely a matter of individual preference. Find some company of worshipers who own Jesus Christ as Master and Lord, and who, by faith in him and with loyalty to him, are working to build the kingdom of heaven in the world, and join yourself to them. Any company of believers of whom this is true is a Christian church, and no company of people of whom this is not true is a Christian church. Probably your early associations will influence your choice. You are more likely to be happy in a communion with whose services and ways of working you are familiar. But the main question should be: "Where can I learn the fastest and serve the best?"

When you have made up your mind which church you will join, go right to the minister and tell him what you desire. Be perfectly frank with him. Tell him that you do not consider yourself a perfect Christian, that there are many things which you do not understand, and many particulars in which you fail, but that you have made up your mind to be a disciple and follower of Jesus Christ; that you are looking to him every day for help to do right; and that you want to own him as your Master and Saviour, and to consecrate your life to his service. You are not very likely, I think, to be repelled by any Christian minister to whom you go with such a declaration. Nor is he likely to insist upon any elaborate examination of your theology; there are few ministers nowadays who will not joyfully welcome any disciple, even though weak in the faith, who can say as much as this.

But perhaps the church has a theological creed to which you will be obliged to assent when you are received into membership. It may be that there are statements in the creed which you do not understand, and cannot honestly say that you believe. This is a point at which you are bound to be careful. Possibly, after further study, you may be able to see that these statements are true. If you can, of course you will have no hesitation about assenting to them; but if you cannot, stop where you are. Do not, in the solemn moment of consecration to Christ's service, say that you believe what you do not believe. Christ wants you in his church, but he does not want you to come in with a lie upon your lips. If there is no door open to you but the door of falsehood and prevarication, stay out. You can find some other body of believers that will let you in without asking you to make any other profession than that of your faith in Jesus Christ and your loyalty to him.

Having gained entrance to the church, you will be ready to begin church work. And in most cases, the best way is to go to your pastor and ask him to show you what to do. It is his business to organize and direct the work of the church; probably he will have some place into which he can put you at once. If he gives you no definite suggestions the first time, go to him again; do not let him forget it; make him see that you are in earnest in your wish to find some way of helping on the work of the church.

In the mean time, keep your own eyes open. Ways of serving are apt to be revealed to those who are looking for service. Only do not look too high. There are many small ministries on which the welfare of the church largely depends, and which are apt to be neglected. See if you cannot attend to some of these. It is better to be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than to be a dead-head. Most valuable service is that which is performed by the ushers who stand at the door of the sanctuary, and there illustrate the patience and the courtesy and the good nature which are the fruits of the spirit. There is work to be done to make and keep the church, or the Sunday-school room, or the prayer-room, comfortable and beautiful; whatever you can do in these directions is excellent service. Committees are to be appointed, now and then, to perform labors that are burdensome and thankless. Be ready to take your place on such committees when you are appointed, and to do your work so thoroughly that you shall come to be known as one who can be depended on.

Perhaps you hold the pen of a ready writer. If so, there may be many ways in which you can make yourself useful. Your minister or your Sunday-school superintendent may be a busy man, whom you can help by making out reports, or filling up blanks, or directing envelopes. Go and tell him to send you any odd jobs of writing that you can do. Not a little of the time and strength of those on whom the greater burdens of the church rest is consumed in labors that might just as well be performed by those who are suffering for the lack of something to do.

The church is engaged in various kinds of work. The Sunday-school is one of the most important, and you may be able to help in that. If your knowledge of the Scriptures is sufficient to qualify you for the work of teaching, volunteer for that service. Teachers are always wanted. If you do not know enough about the Bible to teach a class of little children, go to work at once and prepare yourself to teach. Give a good part of your leisure to faithful and thorough study of the Bible. Do not be content with what you can pick up in a Bible class on

Sunday; your first business is to acquaint yourself with the Word of God; and an hour a week is not enough for that. But by all means connect yourself with the Sunday-school at once, either as teacher or as pupil, or as helper in some part of its work. As a general rule the Sunday-school is the only Sunday service in which the members of our churches have a chance to do any work, to exercise their gifts or their power in any way. In the other Sunday services the work is all done by the minister and the choir and the ushers and the sexton; the great majority of the members are wrought upon, more or less, but they do not work. The only Sunday service that is in the true sense a *service* is the Sunday-school; and church-members who wish to give as well as receive, who are not willing to be mere sponges, ought to be in some way connected with the Sunday-school. Besides, it is through the Sunday-school that the mission work of the church in its own neighborhood is most effectually carried on. The families that neglect worship can generally be more easily reached through their children. The work of invitation which every church ought to be prosecuting is most wisely done through the Sunday-school, and this requires a large number of church-members, adults as well as children, in the Sunday-school. With a little instruction from your pastor or your Sunday-school superintendent, you will be prepared to engage in this work. Get them to assign you some small district for the pastoral care of which you may be responsible; find out the families in it that are not connected with any church; call on them in a friendly way; invite them to Sunday-school and to church; do not be satisfied with one visit, but call often and get acquainted with them; carry a few flowers or a picture-card for the children; win their friendship, and bring them to the house of God. Some of them may be obdurate, but the hearts of many of the poor can be gained by considerate and patient endeavor. Having found your way into a few such families, opportunities of Christian service will open to you on every hand.

You ought to begin at once also to help in the social meetings of the church. It may not be necessary that you should make speeches; but you can at any rate ask questions. The topic of the meeting will be in your thought during the week, and there will be some phase of it on which you will want light. Of course I do not refer to difficult or disputed questions of theology; the prayer-meeting is no place for these; if you want help in settling such questions, go to your minister privately. But there will be questions of Christian experience or of Christian duty, on which you will need some counsel; bring them to the prayer-meeting, and if a proper moment comes, present them there, as briefly and plainly as you can. It is often a great boon to a prayer-meeting to have a question asked if it be one that bears directly on Christian living. You may be able also to give now and then, in a few simple words, a bit of your experience. If you have tested any word of Scripture, you may repeat it and say, "That is true, I know, for I have proved it." A testimony of this sort, that can be given in half a minute, is often far more effective than a ten-minute speech. What we most need to establish the truth of our religion, and bring men to believe it, is not argument but testimony. "Ye are my witnesses," saith the Lord.

There are many ways of helping on the work of the church of which I have not spoken; I have sought to offer a few suggestions to those who are in earnest as to the best way to begin.

II

THE MIDWEEK SERVICE

IT is not only the Nilometer showing how high the waters rise, but it is the Nile itself. If it runs low, the outbranching channels are empty and the church territory is barren; if the flow be full, there are harvests.

How can the prayer-meeting be made effective? This is a troublesome problem. It confronts the pastor like a sphinx, and asks questions which he must answer aright or suffer. If he can solve this difficulty he may expect success. There are perils. The prayer-meeting may degenerate into a weekly lecture by the minister, or it may develop into deep ruts in which a few persons — the same every week — travel with prosy speeches and tedious prayers. Then people steer clear of it, as a boatman steers clear of a sand-bank, not wishing to run his vessel high and dry upon it. In either case the meeting is a failure.

I wish to relate an experience, rather than offer a theory. Years ago when I was a pastor in San Francisco, I was for a long time much perplexed about my prayer-meeting. It did not suit me. I carried it as a burden, and groaned under the weight. It lacked spiritual vivacity. No adequate energies flowed out from it into our church life. It brought me no strength, and gave me no comfort. I resolved to make observations in the fields of others. I went secretly round to the prayer-meetings of the leading churches in that city. I crept in late and hid myself in the remotest corner, or behind a pillar, if there were one. I noted all that took place. Moreover, I thought much upon the subject and prayed for light and help.

As the result of all this I revolutionized my prayer-meeting. It revived and thrived and began to approach my ideal. Strangers were attracted. Even those who were not church-members liked to come. It became a joy to me and a fountain of refreshment. Often I went in dejected and came out inspirited. This was fourteen years ago. Since then, though I have never come up to my aim, the way and the goal have seemed clear to me. Permit me to give you a few hints; they may be useful. Certainly, when I was inquiring, I should have welcomed them. I would say to pastors:

First. You cannot afford to slight your prayer-meeting. Magnify it. Let it engage your best thoughts and affections. Always thoughtfully prepare yourself for it. Set yourself courteously to break up all obstructive formalities. Exorcise the demon of criticism. Be enthusiastic. Be determined to advance the meeting to perfection.

Second. Lay out a scheme of subjects that shall cover a period of three months and print it and freely distribute it in the congregation; or, announce a book of Scripture which you intend to expound consecutively. Every Sabbath call attention to the theme for the next meeting.

Third. Be prompt. Begin at the moment. Never wait for anybody. Continue one hour. End with equal punctuality. Then all know what to expect, and can make their arrangements accordingly. In a time of revival a gentleman came to me and said, "Please lengthen out the meetings." I replied, "No; my meeting begins exactly at eight and closes precisely at nine. If you wish, at nine, to initiate a second meeting, I will not object. I am ready to help. But the regular meeting must maintain its regularity."

Fourth. Give your exposition in the early part of the evening. I have tried other ways, but always came back to this as the best. Let your deliverance be short, pithy, vigorous, compact, comprehensive, and practical. Let it be a condensed sermon. Remember that in this age of steamers, locomotives, telegraphs, and telephones the taste for conciseness has become a passion.

Fifth. Be master of your hymn-book. If you have a poor one, get rid of it. Select the best—not a sensational collection, but one that will wear well. Do not choose too bulky a book; it will be a mill-stone round the neck of the meeting. Study the hymn-book. Mark all the best hymns and tunes. Be able to turn instantly to a hymn, or a verse of a hymn, that shall be accordant with a sentiment that may come to the surface, or that shall be powerful to create one that you desire. You can often use your hymn-book as a mill-race and turn a fall of water upon a wheel which you wish to rotate.

Sixth. Be master of the singing. Lead it yourself if you can. If not, have a good singer who shall sit near you, and be in complete sympathy with you; as responsive to the glance of your eye as gunpowder is to a spark. Or, prevail upon some of your people who are singers to sit on the front seat directly before you, who shall catch up the hymn as soon as your lips indicate it. If you use a melodeon, have it placed close to your platform. Do not permit the tune to be played over in advance. Allow no interludes. Precious time is thus lost, and stiffness is induced. Sing often. Frequently one verse is enough at a time. Do not use didactic hymns, but those that are praises and prayers.

Seventh. Regulate the praying. Pray short yourself. Insist that this exercise shall always be brief. If necessary, introduce a bell, and with its sharp click break in two the backbone of every long prayer. Three minutes are sufficient. Educate to brevity and pertinency. Have as many prayers as possible.

Eighth. After your own exposition, make the meeting free for universal participation. Urge the people to meditate on the passage through the preceding week, and to come with at least one definite thought to be uttered. Encourage the young people to take a part. Invite the women to do likewise. Elucidate the social nature of a true prayer-meeting. There should be as much liberty as in a company of intimate friends in a parlor. In the parlor women are not silent; they generally do their share of the talking. Why should they be dumb in the one great social gathering of the church? Ask those who do not like to rise to bring questions and propound them while seated. Questions tend to stir up the people. They arouse the pastor. He is likely to say his best things in reply. Questions elicit thought and awaken interest. Difficulties are started and are resolved. Objections are stated and answered. Keep the meeting, however, from sinking into a debating club. You are the captain. Fulfill your office.

Ninth. If, after all this, there is a want of responsiveness, and the meetings lag and languish, do not despair. Organize a scheme of this kind: Make a number of lists, say six, including all in your church who can speak and pray in public. Suppose there are thirty-six such persons. Write out the thirty-six names on each list, but arrange them in six divisions, six persons in each division; the first one as a leader, the other five as his followers. Let each of these leaders be responsible, in turn, for one meeting. Inform him when his turn comes. Let him that week see the five persons in his division, and get from every one of them a promise to be present at the meeting, if possible, and to pray, or speak, or give out a hymn; and to do this without hesitating and looking around to see if any other person is about to occupy the time. As soon as the pastor has made the meeting free to all, let the leader of that evening's division rise at his seat and speak or pray, the other five to follow as soon as they can. Such an arrangement as this will secure the action of six persons in every meeting, and will stimulate many others.

Tenth. When the benediction is pronounced, invite the people to linger and converse with each other, and thus let the evening close with the features of a religious social. Endeavor to make Christian brotherhood a reality. Let all strangers be met, welcomed, and asked to come again.

Eleventh. Such is the framework. It must be animated by THE LIFE. Seek, ever, with intensest desire and sincerest prayer, for the presence and grace of the Holy Spirit. Without him, death will reign; with him, life will triumph. He is our teacher, guide, and inspiration.

Twelfth. A prayer-meeting so conducted and so inspired will be a school of instruction for the intellect. It will be a gate of heaven for the soul. It will be the heart of the church, and will send its red, nutritive, vivifying blood through all the arteries down to the capillaries — a current of life that will reach and permeate the pew, the pulpit, the ordinances of the sanctuary, and every household in the congregation.

III

PRAYER-MEETINGS: HOW TO KILL THEM AND HOW TO MAKE THEM ALIVE

IT is easy enough, too easy indeed, to kill a prayer-meeting. I have seen it done by a small kitten. A lively bat or an impulsive June-bug can damage one badly. It is not greatly to the credit of those who meet to pray that their devotions can be so easily disturbed. If our spiritual life were a little more vigorous, our hold upon things unseen and eternal would not be shaken off by such trivial accidents. I speak, however, of what is and not of what ought to be; and nothing is plainer than that those moods of mind which are the conditions of a good prayer-meeting are, with the majority of worshipers, somewhat fitful and mutable. A study of some of the more usual methods by which devotional feeling is shut out, or banished from the assembly, may be of service.

In the first place, a prayer-meeting may be killed by holding it an uncomfortable room. If the temperature be so low that the feet tingle with the cold, and the singers execute involuntary trills as they discourse the melodies of Zion, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to have an enjoyable meeting. There is not much use in asking people to sing,

"Warm our hearts in prayer and praise,
Lift our every thought above,"

when their bodies are shaking with an ague-chill, and, in spite of themselves, their every thought is chained to their aching members. If, on the other hand, the room is so warm and the atmosphere so foul that the worshipers are stifled or stupefied by it, the same result will follow. If men were pure spirits, they might be happy and devotional under such circumstances; but they have bodies as well as spirits, and they find it convenient, generally, to take their bodies to prayer-meeting with them; and if you contrive to make these bodies of theirs thoroughly uncomfortable, you will be likely to prevent them from deriving any spiritual profit from the service.

Second. Another good way to kill a prayer-meeting is to scatter a small congregation over a large space, so that the people shall hardly be within hailing distance of one another, or else to huddle them together in the back seats, while the leader sits stranded on the platform at the other end of the room, with a waste expanse of empty pews between him and the assembly. It goes far to disturb the devotions of the most devout just to think of the lonesomeness and ludicrousness of the leader's position, perched away up there behind the pulpit, and calling dolefully down across the barren benches to the distant worshipers,

> "Though sundered far, by faith we meet
> Around one common mercy-seat."

It may be so, but it takes a very strong faith to realize it. I have thought not a little about the attraction which the back seats have for the average prayer-meeting goer, and am not quite clear in mind about the reason of it. The same people are affected quite differently when they go to a concert or a lecture; and if, in the distribution of seats in the Lord's house, that one should be assigned to them which they always choose in the prayer-meeting, they would be greatly offended. The fact *seems* to be that in the prayer-meeting there is some actual service required of those who attend, and for that reason there is a disposition to skulk and hide. Of course, nothing can prosper when any such disposition as this prevails, and the leader ought to exterminate it, even if he have to use heroic remedies. When it is the custom to call upon persons to take part in the meeting, it might be well to make it the invariable rule to call first on those who sit in the back seats. Let it be understood that that is the exposed position. A fire in the rear sometimes has a stimulating effect upon stragglers.

Or, if the people will settle down at the rear of the room, let the leader follow them back. By some means let the assembly be made compact. If I had a prayer-room too large for my prayer-meeting, and did not want to see the meeting put to death, I would insist that those who came should sit together; and I would carry my point, too, even if it became necessary to procure ropes and tie up the ends of the pews that I did not want occupied, or to have that portion of the room not needed cut off by screens.

Third. It is well known that long speeches and long prayers are usually fatal to a prayer-meeting; and to secure its taking off by this method, it will be useful for the leader to begin by offering a long prayer, and reading a long chapter, and making a long speech, and giving out two long hymns and having them sung to slow tunes. If from twenty minutes to half an hour of the time can be consumed in this way by the leader, the meeting will, as a general thing, be in a moribund condition by the time he sits down. The example which he has set is sure to be followed, and in a very short time some unusually prolix brother will give it its finishing stroke.

Fourth. Debates on doctrinal subjects, especially on those subjects about which nobody in the world knows anything,—on questions purely philosophical or speculative,—are also very effectual in killing prayer-meetings. If you can get up a good lively discussion about foreordination, or perseverance, or the intermediate state, or the nature of the resurrection body, you will put an end to the life of the meeting very soon. That flame of sacred love which burns flickeringly at best on our altars of prayer is quickly put out by a good, stiff breeze of disputation.

Fifth. A free indulgence of criticism by those in attendance upon the prayers or exhortations of those who take part in the meeting will in time injure it mortally. Let those who are wont to speak or pray understand that it is the habit of the rest to talk disparagingly of their abilities or their utterances; let their expressions be quoted and turned to ridicule; let their slips of grammar be noted and commented on; let their infelicitous sayings be reported; in short, let it be understood, or at least suspected, that the exercises of the prayer-room are dealt with by a large number of those who frequent the place just as if they were performances; that they are not accepted as the sincere but faulty utterances of souls seeking the truth, crying out in the darkness after God, but are criticised by the canons of rhetoric and taste, and in a very short time there will be no vitality to speak of left in the prayer-meeting. Those who listen in this critical mood are not in the proper frame of mind to receive good, and those who, conscious of this critical atmosphere that surrounds them, undertake to speak or pray, are not apt to have any good thing to impart, and between them the enjoyment and profit of the meeting are destroyed.

Sixth. If none of these means are effectual, there is one thing that never fails to kill. Turn the prayer-room into a wailing-place. Take up a good part of every evening in talking about the coldness and the deadness of the church, and lamenting that so few come up to her solemn feasts. Sing very frequently the familiar verses:

"Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys;
Our souls can neither fly nor go
To reach immortal joys.

"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies."

If you will sing that, and try to enter into the spirit of it, every Thursday evening, your devotion *will* die after a little. It may live for a while at a poor dying rate; but if it *should* linger, try a little vigorous scolding of those who *are* there because others are *not* there, and that will quickly put it out of its misery.

Such are some of the most approved methods of killing prayer-meetings. I might enlarge upon this branch of the subject, but perhaps it is not necessary.

How to make a prayer-meeting alive is a much harder problem. In most of our evangelical churches it has at least a name to live; very few of them have abandoned it altogether; and in a great many — I trust the large majority — of them the meeting is thoroughly alive, and bringing forth good fruit every year. It is not, therefore, the miracle of restoring a dead prayer-meeting to life which we are to discuss, but rather the natural and rational methods of maintaining the existence and increasing the vitality of those that are already alive.

1. In the first place, as we have already seen, the place in which the meeting is held has much to with its pleasantness and profitableness. There are those whose faith is so robust that it can defy untoward circumstances, but it is not so with all; and a good prayer-meeting implies not only the spiritual quickening of a few, but the profiting of the whole assembly. The room ought to be warm in the winter, *always* warm; so that the people shall have no misgivings when the bell rings as to whether they shall suffer if they answer its summons. It ought to be well ventilated at all seasons of the year.

It is quite possible to have an excellent prayer-meeting in an ordinary lecture-room with fixed pews; but that is not the best model of a prayer-room. A pleasant parlor, carpeted, with pictures on the walls, and chairs arranged in circles round the leader, is much better. What we want to secure is freedom and familiarity, and there is likely to be less constraint and less reserve in such a room as this than in one where the people sit in straight rows on immovable benches.

2. Who shall lead the meeting? The best man, whoever he may be. The system of rotating leaders, which is in vogue in many churches, has some advantages; but on the whole, I think it is not the best system. The members of a regiment would not wisely take turns in commanding, whether in camp or on the battle-field. Some special gifts are required for the successful conduct of a prayer-meeting,—gifts which are not possessed by a good many of those who attend the meeting. The discipline gained by those who lead may be worth something; but all the discipline in the world will not make some of them good leaders, and what slight benefit they gain from the exercise is gained at too great an expense to their brethren. It is sometimes the case that there are members of the church who are quite as well qualified for this service as the minister; if so, let them be called to perform it; but never spoil a meeting for the sake of giving an incompetent person a chance to exercise gifts which the Lord never gave him.

The interest of the meeting greatly depends upon the leader. He ought to be a man of some personal magnetism, ready and rapid in his mental movements, quick to seize a thought which has been left entangled in an unsuccessful statement, and set it at liberty; skillful to turn the talk of the meeting into a fruitful channel, when it is wasting itself in the sands of unprofitable discussion; prompt with a sentence of application to send the arrow home which has fallen all feathered from the bow of another. Above all, he ought to be a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, so that the meeting shall have, through him, an instant and constant impulse from on high.

His opening of the meeting had better be brief. The whole of the introductory service, singing, prayer, reading of the Scriptures, remarks, may well be brought within ten minutes. It is not always necessary to read a whole chapter; the divisions of God's Word into chapters and verses are not inspired, and may often be disregarded with great profit. There ought to be one theme, and only one, presented for the consideration of the meeting; that theme may be found clearly presented in a single verse, or a very few verses selected from different parts of the Bible. It is better to read only what bears on the subject in hand. The remarks which the leader makes, if he make any, ought to be concise and pointed. Perhaps it may be as well simply to state the question, and leave the rest to unfold the truth about it. In a few well-chosen words, let him indicate the direction which the thought of the meeting ought to take, and then give way.

All stereotyped methods of opening or conducting the meeting ought to be avoided. Begin sometimes with reading, sometimes with prayer, sometimes with singing; speak sometimes standing, and sometimes, when you have at best a few familiar words to say, sitting. Keep out of everything that looks like a rut. Don't have the same old prayer-meeting every time; have a new one, fresh from Heaven, with a life of its own, a lesson of its own, a character of its own, every week.

It is important that the leader should be ready for the meeting. Not only ought he to have a clear understanding of the topic under discussion, but all his preparation ought to be made before he goes into the room; so that he shall have no Scripture or hymns to hunt up while the congregation is waiting, so that he shall go instantly from one exercise to another. If his part of the meeting moves on in this prompt fashion, the rest of it will be more likely to move in the same way.

3. I have assumed that there should always be a theme of prayer and remark announced beforehand, either on Sunday or at the previous meeting. It is better that the service should have some unity of purpose and impression. There is less danger from routine, and more likelihood of intelligent and profitable remark, if the topic be announced and adhered to. Some wisdom is called for, however, in the choice of subjects. It may be well to take from the Bible a series of related passages, such as the parables, or the miracles of our Lord, or the letters to the seven churches; or, if single topics are selected, let them be of a practical character,—themes that take hold of the religious life of the individual. Such plain subjects as these we have been talking about in our prayer-meeting lately: "Repentance," "Conversion," "Evidences of Conversion; or, How may I know whether I am a Christian or not?" "Consecration," "The Conditions of Church Membership," "The Benefits of Church Membership." We have found no little interest and profit in trying to understand more clearly some of these cardinal truths of practical religion. I think we shall take up, by and by, some of these themes which come a little closer to every-day duty, such as Honesty in Trade, Evil Speaking, Religion in the Family, Neighborly Kindness, Pride and Humility, Ostentation and Simplicity, Good and Bad Temper. We ministers preach about these matters of Christian morality; why should we not encourage our people to talk about them in the conference meetings,—to apply the truth to themselves, and to seek the grace of God in overcoming these common faults? *If we want live prayer-meetings, we must bring life into our prayer-meetings,*—make them deal largely with questions of life, with religion as applied to life. Such aspects of religion are full of interest to all kinds of people; and if they can see that the prayer-meeting will help them in clearing their ideas of right and wrong and strengthening their hands for the work of life, they will not need so much urging to attend it.

4. Those who take part in the meeting ought to be made to feel the importance of brevity and concentration of thought, both in their words of testimony and in their prayers. The habit of saying just one thing clearly, and stopping when that is said, ought to be cultivated. Let each one present a single aspect of the truth, the one which to him seems most important, and leave something for the rest to say. So with prayer. Encourage those who pray to ask each for that one thing which he wants most for himself or for his brethren. "This one thing I do," said Paul. To do one thing well is better than to do two things by halves. To say one thing clearly is better than to say a dozen things unintelligibly. The concentration of the thought of each person upon one truth, of the desire of each upon one object, renders the thoughts of all more clear, the desires of all more intense. The expressions of such worshipers will be full of vividness and directness, of fervor and power.

5. The meeting ought to be so free and so familiar that one sitting in his seat might ask a question or drop a remark without rising. Sometimes a thought comes that could be expressed in a sentence. It seems hardly worth while to get up to say it; the uprising and the downsitting make it sound affectedly sententious. Yet it would be spoken very naturally by one sitting still, if that were the usual practice, and might have a good deal more in it than many long speeches.

I remember a former parishioner of mine, a man of exceeding diffidence, who never made a speech in his life, in prayer-meeting or anywhere else, but whose daily life and conversation were both of them with grace seasoned with salt. We had a habit in our prayer-meeting of talking pretty familiarly; and although he did not often speak, when he did he usually said something. One evening we had the parable of the great supper and the wedding garment, and the fact came out that the master of the feast furnished the guests with raiment. "And is it not so with our Master?" asked somebody. "Does he not clothe us with the robe of his righteousness?" "He does," I answered. "But we must put it on, must n't we?" asked my friend. Eight words! but nothing was left to be said on that subject.

Now, if we can attain unto a measure of freedom in our prayer-meetings which shall admit of such pithy questions and observations, I am persuaded that their interest and value would be very greatly increased. Our Christian women might, in such a condition of things, open their mouths now and then greatly to the profiting of the rest of us. One step in this direction is easily taken, and that is the repetition of texts of Scripture in the pauses of the meeting by old and young, male and female. The subject is known beforehand, and those who come should be requested to bring in their memory verses of Scripture which illustrate it, and recite them as they find room for them during the evening. Sometimes these well-chosen words will go home to the hearts of the hearers with great power. Verses of hymns, or short and pertinent extracts from the writings of good men, might be repeated in the same way with profit.

One pastor of my acquaintance sometimes arranges the theme of the meeting under several heads, putting the subdivisions in the form of questions, selecting answers to them from the Bible, and distributing these at the Sunday-school among the people, taking care to include a good many of the children of the church. Thus, if the general subject were prayer, the first question might be, "How do we know that prayer is a duty?" And the answer, recited promptly, "He spake a parable unto them, to this end: that men ought always to pray." "How often should we pray?" "Pray without ceasing." And so on through as many phases of the subject as he cares to open. He tells me that those to whom verses are thus assigned rarely fail to come and repeat them; and thus not only is their attendance assured, but they get accustomed to the sound of their own voices in the prayer-meeting. His own comments on the words thus recited are brief, and he reads no other Scripture. The subject of the evening is thus pleasantly opened, and it is easy to take it up and go on with it. This calls for a little work, but less, perhaps, than you may suppose; and no more, perhaps, than you must be ready to give if you would reap any real advantage from this service.

I have not spoken of the singing, but that must be one important feature of the best prayer-meeting. It is better to have an instrument to lead it. That makes it certain that the tunes will be rightly pitched and encourages timid singers to join their voices in the song; and no other instrument is so good for the prayer-meeting or the Sunday-school as the piano-forte. Of singing-books it is well to have, in addition to the one used in the regular church services, some collection of what Mr. Bacon calls spiritual songs,—those lighter and more graceful melodies which are now so commonly in use in the prayer-room. The great majority of our worshipers, especially the younger ones, prefer these. Some of them seem almost puerile in their sentiment; but it is better not to be too fastidious about such matters. A verse that to you or to me may be very faulty may to some others, as good Christians as we, be full of refreshment and stimulus. Such melodies as, "I need Thee every hour," "One more day's work for Jesus," "He leadeth me," "The Valley of Blessing," "More love to Thee, O Christ," "Whiter than snow," "The Lord will provide," are full of a tenderness and passion that are not often expressed in the statelier psalms and hymns of the church books. If you have no collection of hymns specially adapted to the prayer-meeting, resort to your Sunday-school singing-book. You will find, in most of these, many such familiar and spirited songs, which are well adapted to the uses of the social meeting. Indeed, most of the prayer-meeting hymnals are largely made up of selections from the Sunday-school books.

The singing, and indeed all the exercises, should be as nearly as possible spontaneous. The leader may suggest a hymn now and then which fits some sentiment just expressed; and any member of the meeting ought to be free to make the suggestion or to lead off in the singing of a verse. Never take time to read a hymn in the prayer-meeting unless there be something in it to which you wish to call special attention. It is a superfluous formality. When books were not plenty, there was a reason for it: there is none now.

If you can preface the prayer-meeting with a singing-meeting, fifteen minutes or half an hour in length, you may find that helpful in more ways than one. The people may be taught in this way to sing many of the tunes in the church hymn-book with which they are not familiar, and thus the congregational singing on the Lord's day may be greatly improved. Moreover, a brief season of devotional singing is an excellent preparation for the service that is to follow.

What I have said has had almost exclusive reference to *methods* of conducting the prayer-meeting. It will not, however, I trust, be inferred from what has been said that the best methods in the world will of themselves produce good meetings. Methods produce nothing. It is power that produces; it is life that builds. Bad methods may greatly mar the prayer-meeting, but good methods will not make it. What is wanted most is the increase of spiritual power, the invigoration of spiritual life, in those who are called to be saints. The chief reason why prayer-meetings are sometimes dull is that a good many Christian people have very little genuine religious experience to talk about. Their minds are full of other topics than those with which the prayer-meeting deals; their hands are full of other labors than those to which the prayer-meeting points; out of the emptiness of their hearts their mouths won't speak; or, if they do, they utter inanities. The first thing to be sought by all our churches is, therefore, the spiritual enlargement of all their members. Better praying, wiser talking, truer living, harder working will come from this, no doubt.

Yet though an increase of spiritual life is the first thing, and though methods of administration, whether in the prayer-meeting or the parish work, are subordinate, let nobody go on and say that they are of no consequence. In the nutrition of our bodies it is, of course, of the first importance that we should have food to eat; but our health and comfort depend in no small degree upon the way in which it is prepared. "First catch your hare"— oh, of course; but is it not then worth while to know how to cook it?

Patriotism and courage are the prime qualities of a soldier: are drill and discipline, then, of no account in an army?

Power is the first requisite in the mechanical industries: but are not the contrivances by which power is applied of some importance?

Life in the seed, sunshine and rain from the sky, fertility in the soil,— these are the conditions of a good crop of corn: is it necessary, then, for the farmer to know nothing of the methods of cultivating corn?

In our Christian work we must not suppose that machinery will generate power, or that by any arts of culture we can bring dead souls to life; but, on the other hand, we must not despise instrumentalities. We speak of *means* of grace. Well, if grace comes through means, mediums, mediations, there are some, doubtless, that are better than others; it is our business to get the best, and use them faithfully. There is a divine life, but there is also a divine art by which the life finds expression. If we are wise workmen we shall know something of that.

IV

FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

FELLOWSHIP among the churches is greatly to be desired, and much is done to promote it; but fellowship in the churches is also a good thing to which some thought and care may well be given. It is true that many of the social meetings of the church—its conference and prayer meetings, its sociables, and all such assemblies—are calculated to awaken and cherish fraternal feelings; but these assemblies are for the whole congregation, and there is need of an occasional meeting, partly religious and partly social, to which none but members of the church shall be invited, and which shall be wholly devoted to strengthening the tie that binds the believers into one household of faith and one brotherhood of love.

Such a meeting may well be held on the Monday evening following every communion, that there may be opportunity for the members of the church to meet any who may have been received into the church on the preceding day. It is often the case that members thus received have no early opportunity of making the acquaintance of those with whom they enter into covenant; and the solemn words that are spoken by both parties to this covenant appear to be nothing better than mockery, unless some way is provided by which the friendship thus promised may have a chance to begin its life in a mutual acquaintance. In some churches the pastor, on behalf of the church, extends to the candidates the right hand of fellowship; but it is well if the members are permitted to express their greetings in their own way.

If it be found inexpedient to devote a whole evening to this purpose, it may be practicable to give to it half of the hour of the midweek service in the week following the Sacrament. But if the church can be brought to consider the matter, it will not grudge a whole evening, once in two months, for the cementing of its own unity; for the more perfect realization of that communion of saints which its creed so clearly affirms, but which its practice so imperfectly illustrates.

The conduct of this meeting should be altogether informal. It will be well to spend a little time in song and prayer at the beginning; and if there are members of the church who can be trusted to speak judiciously and heartily and briefly of the friendships which the church fosters and consecrates, of the benefits and joys of Christian fraternity, a few words from them may be helpful and welcome. If the work of correspondence with absent members has been organized, according to the suggestion in a previous chapter, this will be the time for the reading of extracts from letters that have been received from them. The list of absent members should also be read for correction; and if a prayer for their welfare should follow the reading, or a verse of a hymn, celebrating the sacredness and strength of Christian love, should be sung, the meaning of this relation might be more deeply impressed upon many minds.

Then an opportunity should be offered for conversation. This intercourse of the fellowship meeting will naturally be somewhat less hilarious than that of the sociable; the voices will be keyed to a lower pitch; the talk will be in a gentler strain; but it ought to be cordial and unreserved. No introduction should be required or tolerated; people who have said to each other what all these have said before the communion-table do not require the formality of an introduction. If you do not happen to know your brother's name, ask him, and no one else, to tell you what it is. Let every one speak first to those whom he does not know, if any such there be, and then to those with whom he is least intimately acquainted; let him reserve his intercourse with familiar friends for other occasions. The themes of conversation cannot be prescribed; but the natural drift of the talk in such a meeting would be, it would seem, toward the more serious topics; toward the life and the work which the church is seeking to promote. After half an hour spent in these familiar greetings and communings, the assembly may again be called to order, and with a few words of prayer and song may be dismissed.

Such a meeting will be of no profit—it will be positively mischievous—unless there be in the church a genuine and hearty fellowship which seeks expression. To call together people who really care very little for one another, who do not prize the friendships into which the church introduces them, who are haughty or supercilious or indifferent toward their fellow-members in the church, and to turn them loose upon one another in the fashion here suggested, would result in nothing but injury. Doubtless there are such people in all our churches. Perhaps there are many churches in which the number of these is so large that no such method as I have outlined could be profitably introduced. But it is certainly true of most of our churches that there is no lack of a real friendship; the only failure is in a proper expression of the brotherly interest and good-will that are in the hearts of the multitude. How often a better acquaintance shows us tender sympathy and self-denying generosity where we had thought were nothing but indifference and exclusiveness. The great majority of our reputable neighbors are far kinder than we think them; the lack which we deplore is not in the feeling so much as in its expression. In the church, more than anywhere else, this is true. Our modern life, in our cities and large towns, is so intense that the opportunities are few for the cultivation of friendships beyond a very narrow circle. And if some simple ways can be devised in which the people of the churches can be brought together and encouraged to express their sympathies and their good wishes, great benefits will result—to those who give as well as to those who receive these overtures of kindness.

It is well to have a short fellowship meeting at the end of every midweek service. The people should be encouraged to tarry for ten minutes or so after the close of this service, for handshaking and the interchange of friendly words. The more opportunities of this sort they enjoy, the less likely are they to indulge in bickerings and jealousies. One of the deepest needs of all our large churches is "a more perfect union": it is needed to consolidate the church for work; it is needed to develop and express those Christian sentiments of good-will which are the only enduring cement of society in these turbulent and ominous times. Assemblies of this nature, which are intended to bring all the members of the church, rich and poor, old and young, together on an equal footing, and to cultivate and manifest a genuine Christian brotherhood, have an influence that reaches far beyond the confines of the church.

V

A CHURCH SOCIABLE

GOOD Christians are all anxiously inquiring nowadays how the churches of Christ are to be united. A more urgent question, and one that logically has the precedence, is this: How are the members of our churches to be brought into a close and endearing fellowship? Until the individual churches are compacted into real unity, it is hardly worth while to expend much labor in trying to bring them together. Let us have cohesion first, then gravitation. If there is unity *in* the churches, there will soon be union *between* the churches.

Now, it is quite evident that the first condition of unity in the church is acquaintance. We are commanded to love one another; but how shall we love one another unless we know one another?

It is a notorious and discreditable fact that the members of our churches do not, commonly, know one another. In some of the smaller churches in country places acquaintance is more general; but in the cities and the larger towns it is the exception and not the rule among church-members. Those who for years have worshiped in the same sanctuary, and have together partaken of that broken bread which symbolizes the "communion of the body of Christ," pass each other daily in the street without recognition. The solemn covenant of mutual help and sympathy which was made by so many of them on the day when they entered into fellowship with the church is thus broken daily.

Various expedients have been devised to remedy this general lack of Christian intercourse. The most common is that of the sewing circle or benevolent society, meeting in the houses of parishioners, to which the ladies go in the afternoon and the gentlemen in the evening. But this does not, in many cases, accomplish the desired result. Although the whole congregation is invited from the pulpit, but a very small portion will go to a private house without a special invitation from the lady of the house. These assemblies are necessarily held in the parlors of the wealthier persons in the congregation, and those living in smaller houses are sometimes disinclined to accept hospitalities for which they can make no return.

The good people of a certain parish of our acquaintance have hit upon a solution of this social problem, which is not altogether original and which is probably no better than many others; but it seems to answer a good purpose, and others may be interested in knowing what it is.

It is called the monthly sociable. It is held on the second Wednesday evening of each month, in the chapel, which, by the way, is admirably adapted to such uses. It is a large, airy room, with open roof, the walls being decorated with pictures, illuminated texts, and brackets, whereon vases of flowers are placed. At the rear of the chapel is the kitchen, containing the cooking-stove and the table-ware for the sociable. Two tables, each about forty feet in length, divided into sections, and resting upon wooden horses, are stowed away in one of the sexton's rooms. On the day of the sociable the sexton removes all the settees, leaving only enough to surround the tables, and one row, the backs of which are placed against the wall, on either side of the chapel. There is an alphabetical list of all the ladies of the congregation, married and unmarried, and of the unmarried gentlemen; and to a dozen or more of the persons on this list in their order is assigned the task of providing the entertainment. This is a supper of a very simple sort, consisting of tea and coffee, sandwiches, or bread and butter, plain cake, and very little in the way of relishes or confections. The tables are spread early in the evening, and the members of the congregation are expected to eat their supper in the chapel. When the feast is prepared, the tables are surrounded, and thanks are given in the good old English fashion by singing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." About one hundred can be seated at the tables, and they are usually twice filled. As soon as the supper is ended, the people are called to order and remain quiet — that is insisted on — while two or three good songs are sung, or some poem is read. This part of the exercises is always brief, however —

the music and the readings never lasting more than twenty or twenty-five minutes. The rest of the evening is devoted to conversation. It is distinctly understood that no introductions are needed at this sociable. People who do not wish to extend their acquaintance are requested to stay away; and those who come may dispense with the formality of an introduction, and make themselves known to each other in the most direct manner possible. It is also one of the cardinal rules, that persons who come should not spend this social hour in conversation with their every-day friends and cronies; but that this meeting is designed to give them an opportunity of becoming acquainted with strangers, and of gaining a little knowledge of those whom they know but slightly. There is no lack of hearty sociability in this gathering, and when the people disperse, about ten o'clock, it is common to hear them say, "This is the best sociable of the series."

This method of promoting acquaintance among church-members involves considerable labor and some expense, but the results abundantly reward both pastor and people for the outlay. It is pleasant to see the zest and good-feeling with which all classes of the people enter into this work. In making out the list it was thought by some that the names of a few of the poorer people in the congregation might better be omitted, as they would find it difficult to contribute to the entertainment; but it was decided to make no exceptions, and the wisdom of this decision has been proved. These poor people have shown that this privilege of helping according to the measure of their ability in this good work is one of which they would not willingly be deprived. Not only has there been no unwillingness, there has been a joyful readiness to do what they could. Those persons whose turn it is to provide the entertainment are commonly notified by the pastor and his wife, and this has always been a pleasant task.

The benefits of this sociable cannot be exaggerated. By means of it the church is being steadily compacted, feuds and jealousies are banished or greatly mitigated, and a basis seems to be preparing for a genuine Christian brotherhood.

This may not be the best possible method of reaching the end proposed, but it seems to answer very well. The supper is an interesting, perhaps almost an essential feature. "The cup that cheers but not inebriates" is a great promoter of sociability. People who have eaten bread together cannot treat each other with coolness and reserve. The music and the readings give a little flavor of a higher sort to the feast, and furnish an attraction to some who would not come for the bread and butter. Holding it in the chapel makes the people feel that they all have a right to it; and the Scripture is fulfilled which saith, "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all."

To one other precaution this sociable owes part of its success. Its managers have carefully avoided attaching to it any financial schemes. The tables of the money-changers have never been set up at this feast. It is not a trap to catch coppers. Subscription papers, and mite contributions, and all that sort, are well enough in their way; but it is a well-ascertained fact that they do not encourage sociability. And, in order that such a social gathering may be a perfect success, it is necessary that the people should understand that there is no mercenary design in it.

VI

THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

MOST churches have a yearly meeting of their members for the transaction of important business. When the "church" and the "society" are separately organized, the meeting of the latter is devoted to the consideration of the finances of the church, and the meeting of the former to its spiritual work and its benevolent enterprises. When the church is itself the financial corporation, both classes of topics are likely to come before the annual meeting. It is better that they should be separated, and that one evening every year should be given to an annual review of the work of the church as a spiritual body, and to a careful consideration of its gains and its losses, of its present condition, and its outlook upon the future.

In the churches of the Congregational, Baptist, Lutheran, and Universalist communions, in all churches congregationally governed, this meeting is a necessary part of the system; and in the churches whose polity is episcopal, as well as in those presbyterially governed, some such convocation is almost equally important.

The meeting at which the financial condition of the church is considered deserves far more attention than it generally receives; but I am now concerned with the meeting devoted to the religious organization.

It is evident that this annual meeting ought to be a conspicuous event in the yearly history of the church; that it ought to call out a general attendance of the membership, and awaken the interest of the whole congregation. Reports of what the church has done during the year and plans for the coming year are likely to be presented; and it is of great importance that every member of the church should know what the church has been doing, and what it proposes to do. In some of these meetings, officers of the church are to be chosen — those who are to be the leaders in its Christian work;

and the members of the church should be interested in securing capable and efficient leaders. The reasons for a large attendance and a general interest in meetings of this nature are many and obvious.

What is the fact respecting them? Is it not generally true that scarcely a tithe of the membership ever attends these meetings; that out of five hundred communicants the presence of fifty at the annual meeting of the church would be regarded as a sign of unusual interest? And is it not evident that, by such an inadequate use of an occasion so promising, the churches must lose heavily?

The fact that so few of the members of the church show any interest in the progress of its work is itself a great discouragement to those who are trying to carry it forward. It seems hardly worth while to project any new enterprises when there are so few who care to know what is the success of the past, and what are the prospects of the future. The consequence is that few attempts are made to get out of the old routine; the church contents itself with going through the conventional motions, with holding the "usual" services, and with recording the usual gains, which are always meager. It is not to be supposed that a more general attendance upon the annual meeting would be sufficient of itself to arouse the church to a more enterprising activity, but it might help considerably in that direction. Certainly it would give the leaders new spirit and motive, and it might stimulate them to devise new methods of work. It is quite possible, too, that when the reports of the labors of the past year were read, the multitude who had taken no part in them would be stirred up to enlist for active service.

The question what can be done to secure a more general interest in the annual meetings of the church is, therefore, well worth considering. Various devices have been tried. Some of the churches provide a free supper on the evening of the annual meeting, and contrive to entice the indifferent through an appeal to their appetite. But it is difficult to see how the amount of work that ought to be done at such a meeting can well be combined with any elaborate festivities. The notion of an annual supper, for the members of the church exclusively, is not a bad one; but it is not clear that the time for such a social reunion is the annual business meeting. My own feeling is that the effect of such a meeting will be far better if those who attend come with the understanding that it means business; that it offers no baits nor bribes; that the reason for their presence is not the promise of something good to eat, but the recognition of their covenant obligation to the church and a purpose to fulfill that obligation. We are in the habit of appealing far too frequently to the lower motives in our Christian work; the more strenuous call of duty has a force in it of which we do not make enough.

It would be well, then, if the minister should take occasion to speak from the pulpit, several weeks beforehand, of the coming of the annual meeting; and to speak about it with an emphasis that should leave no doubt in the minds of his hearers. He should tell them that attendance upon this meeting is expected of every member of the church who is not helplessly ill or absent from the city, and that every member should make his arrangements to be in the city on that evening; that every business engagement and every social engagement should bend to this; that no excuses for absence will be deemed valid but those which spring from hindrances strictly providential; that this is the one meeting of the year from which no member of the church should be absent. He should say to them, also, that it will be quite worth their while to be present, since a full history of the work of the church for the past year will be presented in carefully written reports, and that the work for the coming year will be outlined and discussed. He should take pains to make upon his people the impression that this annual meeting will not be merely a dry routine of formalities, but that it will have a fresh and interesting story to tell of the actual life and work of the church; a story that every member of the church is concerned to hear. This announcement should be emphatically repeated at every succeeding service of the church before the day of the annual meeting.

Then let the pastor see to it that thorough preparation be made for the meeting; and that all the departments of church work be presented in written reports. Oral reports should be strictly ruled out; they are almost always diffuse and inexact.

The clerk should have his statement ready of the gains and losses in membership; of the growth of the church during the year, as compared with previous years; of the names of all persons received to membership during the year; with the names also of those who have died or removed from the city, and of children baptized. The treasurer should have a clear account of the benevolent contributions of the church during the year, comparing them also with the offerings of former years. The Sunday-school superintendent should be ready with a report of the condition and progress of the school, with the record, also, of its benevolent collections, and the purposes to which the gifts of the children have been devoted, and with such suggestions respecting the improvement of the school as a wide-awake superintendent ought to be able to make. The superintendent of the missions, if there be any, under the care of the church, should be present with similar reports. The Ladies' Benevolent Society, the Literary Club, the Young Men's Union, the Young Ladies' Guild, the Women's Missionary Society, the Mission Bands, every organization within the church that is helping in any way to promote its religious work or its philanthropic activity, or its social life, should be represented by clearly written and condensed reports of the work of the year, with such hints and requests respecting the future as it may seem good to the officers of these organizations to present.

All these should be followed by the pastor's report, summing them up, adding his own comments, and presenting, from his own point of view, the existing condition and needs of the church, with suggestions as to future work. Most of the reports of departments will be brief; not more than three or four minutes each will be required for the reading of them; the reports of the Sunday-school superintendent and of the mission superintendent should take a little longer time; but the pastor's report should be a comprehensive, well-digested *résumé* of the current history of the church, as generous in its recognition of the good work done as it can truthfully be, as hopeful of the future as it can wisely be, yet tenderly faithful in pointing out the shortcomings of the church, without a scolding accent in a single sentence, and as full of spiritual earnestness as his best sermons. It is a great opportunity for a pastor. No better chance of putting in his work where it will do the most good will come to him in the course of the year.

All these reports should be received and recorded in a book kept for the purpose. The clerk may be too busy to transcribe them all; but it will not be difficult to find some young lady in the church who has leisure, who writes legibly, and who will undertake this task. An appeal for such a service at the annual meeting will be answered by volunteers. A record book of this description, in addition to the ordinary record of the clerk, will be of the greatest value. The history of the church is here fully written out; future pastors will find it full of suggestions; generations to come will be deeply interested in the picture which it presents of the life of this time. I know a church which adds every year about thirty closely written pages of a large record book to its current history.

If there are officers to be elected, some consultation before the meeting will generally facilitate this operation, so that the choice of officers can be expeditiously and wisely made.

It is evident that not much time can be given to discussion at this meeting; but in churches congregationally governed the questions arising out of these reports, and the recommendations made by the pastors and other officers, can come up for discussion and action in subsequent meetings of the church, if time should not be found for deliberation at the annual meeting. With a chairman who can expedite business, a programme such as I have sketched can be finished in an hour and a half, or two hours at the longest. And nobody will be likely to complain that the meeting is tiresome.

These suggestions respecting the best methods for improving the annual meeting of the church are offered with some confidence in their practicability. They have been pretty thoroughly tried, and have been found to work well. If the pastor is himself in earnest about the matter; if he lays the matter upon the conscience of his people; and if he sees to it that the meeting is made what it ought to be,— a fresh, clear, vital expression of the life of the church,— the attendance will be pretty sure to be greatly increased, and the annual meeting, instead of being what it often is, an occasion of humiliation and discouragement, will be the best attended and the most enthusiastic meeting of the year.

VII

WOMAN'S WORK IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

WOMAN'S work in the local church depends on the location of the church. But even this statement must be modified. The theory of the church has much to do in determining the answer to our question. If its mission is accomplished when the preaching and worship of the Sabbath are over, the chief duty of woman is to be a good listener. Men usually pay the bills. Unless she be unmarried she will not expect, or be expected, to contribute to benevolences. But that is a narrow conception of the office of a local church. Where the emphasis is on the *service*, on forms, where all things are planned to please and "satisfy every taste," the duty of women as well as men will appear to be very different from what it is where the emphasis is on beneficent action. The ideal, and the location, are important factors in our problem. Woman's work in John Hall's church, in Fifth Avenue, is not the same as in John Dooley's, in Broome street. It will be different in the country from what it is in an urban or suburban community. There are not the same opportunities of labor in suburban towns, or in rural cities, as force themselves on the attention of those whose homes are in New York, Boston, or Chicago. The function of each church is necessarily more or less modified by its environment.

The social life of a community is usually in the hands of women. They determine what shall be done in society. It is the duty of Christian women, therefore, so to direct and control society that it shall not interfere with, but minister to, spiritual life. There is a constant strife between what is social and what is spiritual. The rush of entertainments, the rivalry in display, the wicked extravagance of women which leads men into crime, the constant dissipation which makes it impossible for the church to get a fair chance at those who need its ministries, are facts which cannot be questioned. Growth in spirituality is an impossibility when such conditions prevail. Their existence is entirely in the hands of women. They plan for them, they can modify and control them. It is the first work of Christian women in a community so to organize and direct its social life that it shall minister to, and not hinder, the work of the church. If they insist that the evenings of church meetings shall be kept free from entertainments, that social gatherings shall assemble and disperse at reasonable hours, that immodest styles of dressing shall not prevail, they will do more to promote the progress of Christianity in the world than in all other possible ways. Woman's greatest power is social, and she can do more to advance Christ's kingdom by proper use of that power than by missionary societies and temperance societies and homes for the friendless. The social environment powerfully influences the whole life of man. It can be determined and properly limited only by women. If the women of each church who occupy prominent social positions would confer together concerning these matters, and unite on a plan of action, beneficent results would speedily follow.

The charitable work of a church is of two kinds, viz.: that which relates to the parish and that which is outside. Under this head we shall consider the former. There is little need to stimulate activity in this department. Our suggestions will concern what we conceive to be a waste of power. Usually, in an average church, will be found a Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society, a Ladies' Home Missionary Society, a Ladies' Aid Society, a Young Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society, a Young Ladies' Home Missionary Society, and probably a Children's Band. The result of so many societies is confusion, a dissipation of energy, and, probably, a much smaller proportion of workers than if there were fewer societies. Where there are so many meetings none are well attended, there is little enthusiasm, and those who endeavor to attend all are unduly burdened. Why should not the elderly ladies have one society, doing work abroad, in our own country, and in the parish? One good meeting a week is worth a dozen poor ones. When the notice one week is for the Ladies' Home Missionary Society, and the next for the Foreign Missionary Society, and the next for the Aid Society, the average female is confused, and concludes to remain at home. The constitutions of some of the general organizations, to which the local societies are auxiliary, contain clauses which forbid such combination of activity as is here indicated. Those provisions are foolish, and ought to be disregarded by local societies until broader and fairer plans of working are adopted. An illustration of this absurdity is in the constitution of the Woman's Board Auxiliary to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. There can be no doubt that this organization has been a magnificent success. There can be just as little doubt that the clause in its constitution to which reference has been made has been a great hindrance to the best work in the local church.

The charitable work of the church, as distinguished from the missionary work, divides itself into three or four departments. We shall only refer to those things which should be done by women. It will be a good rule for the women in all churches never to do anything which they can prevail upon the men to do. The tendency on the part of the male church-members to shirk ought never to be encouraged by the more conscientious and confident women.

In all communities of average size there should be a Childen's Home. Such an institution is needed not more by the children than by those who have no work which appeals to their sympathies. In rural villages there may be no place for such a home, but in all cities, and suburban towns, there is constant need. In suburban towns, if there are not children who are suffering near at hand, they can certainly be brought from the cities.

Usually, the Children's Home will be a union institution. In order that it may be properly conducted, denominational lines should be ignored. Those who manage it should be chosen, not with reference to the church they may attend, but for their ability to do the work. Many boards of managers are more than half composed of those who never do anything, and whose names appear only as sops to the detestable denominational spirit. This work must be chiefly in the hands of women. Where no such institution exists, those who are in harmony, who have faith in its necessity, should meet and organize, and make their appeal to the community. Each church that is able to do so, or, in smaller communities, a union of Christian people in the various churches, should maintain a Children's Home. The limits of this chapter will not allow details for the management of such institutions, but they can be easily secured from the managers of the many already in existence.

If the town is of sufficient size, or composed of a population requiring such provision, there should be included in the Home a "Day Nursery," where poor women who are compelled to work out, and have little children with no one to care for them, can leave them during working-hours. This is one of the best methods for giving wise assistance to the poor.

Where it is possible, there should be a committee of ladies in each church for *home lectures*. These lectures are for the benefit of poor women, servant girls, and those who have no advantages of education in hygienic and sanitary matters. This department of activity has been carried to a higher degree of perfection in Birmingham, England, than elsewhere. There it is in the hands of a society of women, with the wife of Dr. R. W. Dale at the head, and is not connected with an individual church. In this country it is connected with a specific church. The plan is as follows: A committee of women competent for the service is chosen by the pastor. They select a room in proximity to the class to be reached. Then they arrange a course of lectures by competent speakers on such subjects as the following: How to Prevent Sickness, The Care of the Babies, The Training of Children, The Outside of the House, The Home Beautiful, How to keep Men and Boys at Home, What to do in Emergencies. To such lectures as these are added others on Economical Living, Cooking, The Art of Nursing, etc. The lectures are conversational in form, and, as far as possible, illustrated. All the lectures are free. The good-will of the Catholic priest is secured by submitting the whole plan to him and showing him that there is no ulterior design. Personal invitations are given to a small number, and they are provided with cards of invitation to circulate as they may think best. Especial attention is paid to securing the attendance of servants. The advantages of such work are many. They disseminate needed information. They give opportunities for Christian women to come in contact with the poor and ignorant in such ways as show their unselfishness and the genuineness of their interest. The gate into the spiritual usually leads through things temporal. Those who thus from simple love minister to the poor in temporal things find them more willing to listen when they are approached on matters pertaining to religion.

No workers in a church can do more to increase its usefulness than a band of properly qualified deaconesses. Shall they be elected as other officers? or shall they be selected by the pastor as his especial helpers in pastoral work? The writer of this paper prefers the latter method. The pastor selects such a number and such persons as the circumstances of the church make expedient. The whole parish is divided into districts. Each district has a deaconess whose duty it is to keep watch over all the persons in that district. If any need the pastor, she informs him; if any are liable to be neglected, she asks others to call and extend friendly courtesies; if any are poor, and need assistance, they are reported to the proper officers; if any strangers come into her district, she takes care that they are invited to attend church. These are what may be called the social and temporal duties of the deaconesses. Then follow the spiritual duties. They keep watch over all in their district, and if any need especial care they go to them, and either help them, or direct them to the proper ones to give help. They visit young converts; they talk with the unconverted, look after the sick, and if need be pray with them; they act for the pastor in all possible ways. They have a monthly or a weekly meeting with the pastor, at which the results of their calling and various observations are reported, and they give to him usually the most reliable information he obtains concerning the condition of the parish. Where the proper women are secured for this work, no people in the parish are likely to be neglected. All are called upon, and the pastor is kept informed as he could not be if dependent on his own resources alone.

The women chosen for this service should never be of the "goody goody" kind, and seldom past middle age. They should be selected for their social position and social gifts, as well as for their spirituality. Sociability, social position, intelligence, and spirituality are essential to the successful deaconess. These qualifications are far more likely to be secured when the pastor carefully chooses his helpers than when they are selected by vote of the church.

These are the more prominent ways in which women are helping in the advancement of the Kingdom of God in connection with parish work. No mention is made here of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, because that is distinctively national, and takes hold of a community rather than a parish. Women's prayer-meetings no doubt do great good in certain communities, but it is hard to see why there should be a separate meeting for women any more than for men. In this day, when the sexes are speaking from the same platforms, practicing the same professions, acting together on school-boards, and studying in the same schools, why should they not confer and pray together in religious assemblies? Where that is impossible, women's meetings for prayer are desirable. But it is never well to keep too many meetings moving. Multiplicity of gatherings usually means dissipation of spiritual power.

In all churches for about eight months of the year there should be monthly sociables. These should be in the hands of women who are especially gifted with sociability. The average church sociable is about as uninteresting as the average prayer-meeting, and for the reason that the persons usually best qualified to have charge of them have nothing to do with them. These meetings, whose sole object is to promote acquaintance between those who would not otherwise know one another, are often in the hands of some prim, precise, persistent, and crotchety woman, who may be worth her weight of gold in some places, but who has no more fitness for her office than the average minister has to be director of an orchestra. If there are three women in any church who know all the people, who can talk with animation and interest, who can make an evening enjoyable even for the most sedate and common, they are the ones to have charge of the sociables. Mrs. Prim and Mrs. Precise may attend all the other meetings, but they repel the average man, and the timid woman who has just moved into the parish. They will kill the sociables if they manage them.

We have spoken of what woman has done and can do through the church. But woman's best work is never in organizations. It is in her power to inspire rather than in her ability to manipulate machinery, in what she induces others to do than in what she does herself. The most efficient woman is she who uses the magnetism of a refined and spiritual personality to keep before those who surround her lofty ideals in social and religious life; who stimulates inquiry and endeavor along lines elevated and beneficent; who makes her home, if she has one, and, if not, the circle in which she moves, to thrill with enthusiasm for knowledge and purity and helpfulness. Not the less necessary, however, is that which can be done only through organizations. To them the church of to-day owes a large part of its efficiency.

This chapter would be incomplete without a few words of caution.

First. Woman's power is largely in her tact; but some women have no tact. Care should be taken to prevent such persons from getting into places of authority. They will not intend to fail; they will simply be misfits. All the same they will spoil the best attempts to do efficient service. People will not work with those who are not agreeable. Perhaps they ought to, but they will not. Those who are in the prominent places should be agreeable women as well as good women.

Second. There are always sure to be many societies among the women in a large church, and this leads to the statement that no part of the church should be set apart to the use of any one society if there is any possibility of a conflict. The whole church is for the whole church, and no little coterie should monopolize the management of any one part of the edifice.

Third. In all church societies, where it is possible, compulsory rotation in office is desirable. Thus responsibility is divided, and if any persons are put in positions they are not fitted to fill, in due season they rotate out, and those who have the right to vote profit by past mistakes, and elect right persons next time.

Fourth. Woman's work is first in the home and then in the church. The one should never be neglected for the other. Missionary societies, and children's homes, and outside calling are never so important for a mother as the care of her family. Many a man is unfaithful to the marital relations because no smile welcomes him when he comes wearied and jaded from business; and the place that ought to be his haven of rest, his refuge from storms, is unsociable and monotonous and gloomy. When women make their homes beautiful, and diffuse through them a contagious sociability that shall make them attractive, then they may consider what they can do outside. Many a woman is eloquent at a missionary meeting, and tireless at an aid society, who is glum and repulsive when with her husband and family. The home is the holiest of churches.

We have sought in this chapter simply to offer some hints concerning a large and diversified subject. All the suggestions toward special lines of activity are descriptions of what is already in operation, and the warnings have back of them painful experiences from which others may be shielded. What has been is only a prophecy of what is to be. This century has given us Florence Nightingale and Sister Dora, the deaconesses at Kaiserwerth and at Mildmay; Ann Hasseltine Judson and Mrs. Capron; Octavia Hill and Clara Barton; and a church whose efficiency has been doubled because of what women have done. The century that will follow will show churches freer and more efficient, and in them a larger place for the enthusiasm and fervor of consecrated Christian women.

VIII

MAN'S WORK IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

THE fundamental fact of the present industrial *régime* is the fact of the division of labor. The almost miraculous increase of the productive powers of labor, which results from the subdivision of the various manufactures into many simple separate processes,— thus permitting the use of machinery, and promoting rapidity of execution in hand-work,— is a matter of common observation. To this improved method the overflowing wealth of the century is largely due.

There seems to be danger, however, of carrying this division of labor too far in some directions. Every man combines in himself quite a number of different characters. He is a business man, or a professional man, or a laboring man,— a bread-winner, by some method of industry; that is one of his characters. He is a neighbor: he may be a husband and father, a son or brother; he is a citizen; he is, or ought to be, a church-member. Now, it is important that he perform not one or two of these functions well, but all of them. This is what is meant in the New Testament by being a "perfect man." Perfection does not mean sinlessness but completeness,— the symmetrical development of the whole man; the fulfillment of all normal functions. Holiness is wholeness. One would not be called perfect physically who had a splendid head, or arm, or chest, but was dwarfed or crippled in several other members; the physically perfect man would be the one whose members and organs were all healthily and equally developed. So, a man could not be said to have a perfect character who was a kind neighbor, but not a good husband and father; or who was a faithful church-member, but not a public-spirited citizen; or who was a very successful money-maker, but not much of anything else. And the tendency to which I am now referring is the very strong tendency among large classes of our citizens to become successful money-makers and not much of anything else. This is carrying the division of labor a trifle too far.

19

The fact is recognized that money is power. It commands all sorts of commodities, and all sorts of services. You can buy almost any species of goods you can think of, if you have money enough; and you can have almost anything done that you want done, if you have money enough. You can hire men to plow, to reap, to delve, to drive, to build, to buy, to sell, to teach, to heal, to talk, to pray, to cheat, to tempt, to curse, to destroy. There are some whom you cannot hire to do some things; some whom you could not hire to do what they believe to be wrong. The common saying that every man has his price is a stupid slander; but there are few services, no matter how base or desperate, that you cannot hire somebody to perform, if you have money enough. And, generally, if you choose to use it for that purpose, you can command with money the services of good men and women to do many kinds of good work. Now there are many kinds of benevolent services that must be done by those who devote their lives to them; and they must be supported in doing them by the contributions of others. This is an instance of the division of labor, and some such arrangement is necessary. But my point is, that we are in danger of carrying it too far. There are not a few among us who are quite too much inclined to devote themselves exclusively, or nearly so, to the secular calling, or to the making of money, and to think that they can commute the service due from them in various relations by the payment of money. "Money will command services," they say: "you can take our money and hire somebody else to do this work which you say we ought to do. Is not this the more economical and effective method? We know more about making money than about these other kinds of work: others know more about these other kinds of work than about making money. Let us stick to business, while you take our money and hire these things done."

This is the plea, plausibly and often honestly urged, whose validity I wish to examine. It seems to me utterly unsound. It is true that we need money for such philanthropic services; money is often quite indispensable; but the crying need of these great enterprises is the need of men. There is power in money; it will command services; but there is a stronger power,— the power of consecrated manhood,— and it is for this that the church is calling to-day by all the voices of its deepest need and its heaviest woe.

Let us hear how this specious plea should sound if we should apply it to our households. Imagine the husband and father saying this: "My business in this family is that of breadwinner. To that I must devote all my energies. I can spare no time or thought for home duties; the home must furnish me with meals and lodging, but it must expect little from me; the fireside influence, the training of the children, the comfort, the welfare, the enjoyment of the family some one else must look after; I will furnish the money, all that is necessary to supply the needs of all, to pay for the education of the children; but I can give no attention to it myself." Would this be a judicious arrangement? We may confess that a good many fathers of families are, practically, following about this course; but they will hardly venture to defend it. It is not the right way to live, even if it is the way that many of us do live. And many a home, filled with all the luxuries that money can buy, is sadly in need of something that money cannot buy. A family needs a father much more than it needs furniture and plate and liveried lackeys and waiting-maids. "Not more money, but more love and care!" is the pathetic appeal of many a family to its natural head, who is neglecting most of his domestic duties in the absorbing work of building up a fortune.

The same question may be raised with respect to the church to which you belong. There are not a few of the adult male members of our churches who are strongly inclined to say that they can give to the church no personal service. They are ready to contribute liberally for the support of the church; they will pay others to perform Christian work in their stead; but their business cares are so pressing and so constant that when any religious service is required of them, they with one consent begin to make excuse. From a busy church-member in New York, a man, by the way, who, although his business cares are heavy, is seldom absent from prayer-meeting, comes a letter in which are these words: "The Rev. Dr. B—— [pastor of a large suburban church] finds that all the men in his church go to New York during the day and come home so tired that he cannot get much work out of them. Accordingly he has assigned districts for visitation to women whom he calls deaconesses. The Rev. Dr. R—— [pastor of one of the largest churches in New York City] rightly or wrongly has come to the conclusion that his men are so busy that he must run his church with paid theological students; and he says that the outlook in the cities is that we shall not only have paid choir singers, sextons, and visitors, but also paid elders and deacons. This would seem to be a logical sequence of rented pews and hired choirs."

Dearly beloved brethren, how does this prospect please you? Will the church be in a healthy condition when this state of things is realized? Doubtless your money will hire agents, visitors, city missionaries, and all such helpers and servants of the church; but do you think that these people can do your work? They can do something, no doubt; the fact that they are hired to do the work is no proof that they will not do it conscientiously; but your faith, your love, your zeal, your earnestness, your personal consecration, will not be in the work; and while your money may help, the work wants you a great deal more than it wants your money.

Our churches, as working bodies, are sorely weakened, nowadays, by this cause. The church work is not so well done as it ought to be, because it is left, almost all of it, to the ministers and the women. It is not good for the churches that the practical shaping of their lives is left so largely to the ministers and the women. It is scarcely necessary to say that I despise neither ministers nor women; but I see the crying need in our church administration of forces which neither of them can set in operation. Good mortar, I observe, is made of water and lime and sand, in due proportions. That would not be good mortar for building which was composed almost wholly of water and lime, and had in it very little sand. But he who declared that it was not good mortar would not be understood as denying that water and lime are both essential ingredients and, perhaps, finer and more precious than the sand.

This lack of the robust and virile element in the religious life of our churches is greatly to be deplored. We hear much of

"Woman's Work in the Church"; essays and treatises are written about it; there is an excellent one in the pages just preceding this, written at my request, and well written. The theme is a fruitful and a pleasant one; it is well to discuss it. But it is time somebody was beginning to talk a little more cogently about "Man's Work in the Church." Really that is of considerable consequence, also. And there is not nearly so much of it as there ought to be. No wiser word is in Dr. Bradford's paper than the counsel to Christian women to do no work that they can prevail upon men to do.

There is reason for saying that the men of this generation are shirking much of the work that belongs to them. The work of education, as well as the religious work of our churches, is committed, in all but the highest grades, almost exclusively to women. In the high schools and the colleges the men have some part in it ; but nineteen-twentieths of our boys and girls have no other teaching than that of women. I do not question the value of the work done by our women teachers; as a rule it is patient, thorough, admirable work. No better work could be done by men. But the work of men would be different work. Men's ways of thinking, of speaking, of acting, of teaching, are no better than women's ways; but they are unlike women's ways. The impression made upon the mind of a boy or girl by constant association with an intelligent, honorable, high-minded man is no better than that made by an intelligent, honorable, high-minded woman; but the force exerted is of a different value and acts in a different way; and for the right training of our boys and girls we need both kinds. We ought to have men as teachers in all our grammar schools; not necessarily in the chief places, for there are women who are quite as well qualified as men to organize and direct the work, but somewhere in the course of study. In the school, as in the home, we make a great mistake when we assume that the training of the young, the building of character, is exclusively or mainly a feminine function.

For all these reasons, and others that cannot now be mentioned, the division of labor by which our strong men devote themselves mainly to the business of bread-winning, and leave the higher avocations — those which are concerned with the moral and spiritual interests of mankind — largely to the care of women, is a mischievous arrangement. That our churches are suffering grievously from this cause is painfully apparent. When you go into a prayer-meeting and find five to ten times as many women as men, you see a sign that is ominous. When you discover that the charitable and mission work of our cities is done mostly by women, you hit upon a fact which explains many others. Money power is, for many purposes, a valuable kind of power; no sensible man will deny or disparage it; but the power that we need most in all our churches is man power. Holy Ghost power, do you say? Certainly; that is what I mean. Consecrated man power — the kind of power that the Holy Ghost can exert through the character and life of a man. This is a different kind of power from that which he can exert through the character and life of a woman. The sun sends a different ray through the purple pane of your window from that which he sends through the scarlet pane; the tuneful breath of the musician produces a different sound when it vibrates in the silver tube of the flute from that which it makes in the brazen convolutions of the bugle. And the divine light and inspiration, as revealed to the world in the life of a man, is different in tint and tone from that which appears in the life of a woman. It is this particular kind of spiritual power that the church needs to-day. We need the money of our strong men, of course; but we need their presence, their influence, their help, their personal power a great deal more. If every pastor could have his choice between the addition of a few hundred dollars to his salary and the addition of a score of strong men to the working force in Sunday-school and prayer-meeting and mission work, few of them, I think, would be long in choosing. Money power is good, so long as clear heads and consecrated hearts go with it to wield it; but when money power is divorced from moral power, and comes to be regarded as the chief motive power in the work of any church, the ruin of that church is already wrought.

IX

MISSION WORK IN THE WIDE FIELD

THE mission of no church ends with itself, or with the land in which it is planted. It must embrace the world. The Master said, "The field is the world; disciple all nations; to every creature preach my Gospel." That he might draw the world unto himself, he was lifted up.

To make the one Name known, the world over; to make the kingdom of Heaven conterminous with the habitable globe; to enthrone Christ in the world out of which he was cast; to send his word coursing through the literature of all nations; to plant the Gospel tree among all peoples for their healing from the deadly hurt of sin,—this is the mission of the Church of Christ. For so hath the Lord commanded us: "I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."

And preaching, also pray. Pray, how? Thy kingdom come. Pray ye the Lord of harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.

It will be said, This is axiomatic. It is even commonplace. Why, then, is it but half believed? It is grand enough to wake the wonder and call forth the acclaim of angels; why does it kindle so little enthusiasm in human hearts redeemed? Our Christ died to have it so; what are we doing that the passion of his heart may be realized? You know, perhaps, five hundred disciples. How many are enthusiastic for missions beyond our own shores? How many give a cent a week that such a consummation may be reached? How many, intelligent in other matters, open to other calls, tell you frankly that they do not believe in missions to the heathen, and shut their purses and keep the cause out of their wills? And this is the nineteenth century! These very men read their New Testament, and say the Lord's Prayer, and around his table confess Christ to be Lord as well as Saviour!

The question is not now as to the relative claims of this or that, but of room for any claim at all as toward the outlying world. This grave matter needs to come home to at least thirty-three per cent. of the church as a call to swift repentance, and works meet therefor; and to all the Church of God, as a summons to wipe out this stain from her escutcheon. This is affirmed to be the matter of chief concern. If we cannot shame this disloyalty to Christ out of the camp of his Israel, why dwell on methods of warfare?

It is sometimes said, "We believe in this outlying work, but it must take its turn. Just now, for ten or twenty years to come, the great work is here at home." We have prophets of this sort. Are they divinely sent? They get no countenance from apostolic precedent or Christ's words, nor are they accredited by the experience of the churches in this modern era of missions. No man knows enough to lay out the work of the kingdom for ten or twenty years. It is presumption so to attempt. Whence is salvation to come to this land? No man can say but that fidelity to the great commission, in the literal terms thereof, and the sort of consecration which this would beget, constitute the very element lacking which our home work would be shorn of power. A world-field; a waiting church; a presiding, guiding, inspiring spirit; the Master's call, heard and heeded, coming from the four quarters of the globe,—these are essential factors in the problem. The urgency of the hour, read in needs, opportunity, results of work, distributes itself very evenly over the globe.

This is primarily a matter for ministers. If they stand squarely on this platform, their ears open to every Macedonian call, expecting to hear it from the east, west, north, and south, their eyes on the wide field to see how it fares with the standard-bearers of the cross at the front, and their hearts open in generous sympathy toward every worker in the wide field, the prayers of Christ freighting their prayers for the triumph of the kingdon, their zeal will be contagious.

But if ministers do not know anything about the work or the workers, and seldom seem to care what becomes of the heathen world, and never to realize in prayer or discourse that Christ has thought or purpose for any besides their flock, or at most the land they live in, and really fall behind many of their people in intelligence, their indifference will do much to damp the ardor of the engaged and quite smother out the smoking flax. Which sort of a minister are you? Which sort of a pastor is yours?

The thing to be done is to take this world for Christ. The church, organized as pastor and people, is to do it. Two things are requisite, men and money. There is a force at the front to be recruited, enlarged, sustained: recruits and means to be drawn, as yet, mostly from the church at home. If they are forthcoming it will be because of faith in the work, intelligence in regard to it, prayer for its success, giving for its advancement; and prayers and gifts will be in proportion to faith and intelligence.

It is a part of the minister's business to educate and stimulate his people for this work,— the grounds of it, in the fatherhood of God and the needs of all men; the authority for it, in the mission of Christ and his specific command; the encouragements to it, in the actual results. And fruits of missions among all sorts of people, specially the history of nineteenth-century work in the wide field, are matters to be kept before the people till they are intelligently grasped and held.

Then, too, there are prejudices to be removed, current objections to be met, unbelief to be uprooted, newspaper scribblings to be tested in the light of authentic facts. Stale though these objections may be, and answered a thousand times, they will not down.

The real purpose of missions, as initiative, the great object being to start a work that will, in due time, propagate itself out of the resources of the very lands just now in utter darkness; and the methods of prosecuting it, as well as the hindrances peculiar to each land and people, are matters the church needs to know, as well as how the process works in fact. Some of this work the minister can do from his pulpit, some of it in the social meetings for prayer, some of it in pastoral contact with the people. There are ministers who have so utilized their Lord's day evenings in lectures on the religions of unevangelized lands, the history of missions among them, and missionary biography, or in well-planned children's concerts, as both to fire their own and their people's zeal, and make these meetings the largest they ever draw. Some use maps, black-boards, object-lessons, and lantern-slides, with marked effect.

The monthly concert of prayer for the conversion of the world has grown into an institution of the church, often unwieldy and prosaic, while theoretically, and in its possibilities, leading all other social meetings. It is primarily a meeting for prayer, and along one line. All else is auxiliary to this end, that the church may *pray* aright. To realize the ideal concert of prayer is worth the best that is in a man.

There needs to be an equipment of outline maps, on which the work of the church can be indicated. If they can be extemporized on black-board or canvas, so much the better, but they ought to be had somehow.

Current missionary literature, not only of one's own church, but covering the wide field, should be within reach. Missionary biography and historical sketches of the work on particular fields contain great riches to be drawn upon at all times. Happily, the material for such occasions is abundant and within easy reach. It needs to be possessed, digested, and made ready for use. The missionary organizations of the church should come to the front at the concert. Where it is possible, it is best that responsibility be distributed, and contributions made by many individuals. The greatly developed interest of the women and young people of the church is favorable to such participation. Many a sprightly paper that has done service for a little knot of praying women and been laid away might well be brought forth to enliven a monthly concert. But heavy articles, and long essays, and prosy readings from journals must be resolutely excluded if the meeting is to live at all.

Of all social meetings this will least bear extemporizing. Some one must father it. The leader, be he pastor or layman, must be full of the matter of the occasion, have his helpers well in hand, be ready to supplement deficiencies or launch a thought to give emphasis or new direction to what has been said. Some ministers are so far behind their people on missionary themes that they make themselves ridiculous so often as they open their lips upon them. There is but one remedy: catch up; keep up.

A missionary concert ought not to be limited to one section of the earth's surface. It is the field-night for the world. What has a month done for the kingdom? What's the news from the wide field? What the movements among the nations, and how do they affect the kingdom? What recruits, victories, defeats have been registered? President Edwards says, "If I heard the least hint of anything that happened, in any part of the world, having a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly catched at it." It were well if all were accustomed to scan their newspapers with their eye on the bearings of current events upon the kingdom of Heaven. To this end it is well that the different sections of the world be parceled out to as many individuals, and a place made for monthly items of news, briefly stated and made the occasion for prayer or thanksgiving.

There is no better place to begin this work of training for the wide field than the Sunday-school. In all churches it is already organized and officered. It is only necessary to constitute it a missionary society, give a session each quarter to a live programme of songs, talks, question and answer, and turn the offerings on certain Sabbaths of each month in this direction. The pastor and the official board of the church will need to look after this, if it is done. If they have allowed the school to slip out of their hands, and made the superintendent autocrat of this branch of church work, then, nine times out of ten, this cannot be done. Considerable experience in three or four States, for four years, has shown me that one thing in which the average superintendent cannot be counted upon is interest in foreign missions, and that the funds of Sunday-schools are the most ill-directed of all the moneys of the church. There are many notable exceptions. But, if the pastor is leader, here as elsewhere, and church officers, superintendent, and teachers will coöperate, there is no place so favorable for training a missionary generation and nothing more important to be done.

Out of the general interest thus awakened, bands of children and youth can be crystallized around some intelligent, zealous teacher for special work, as out of the congregation societies of women have been organized to promote their own growth in missionary zeal and meet an emergency of the times. Whether any such, and how many, can be fitly encouraged is a matter for local adjustment. Every such circle must have a competent, inspiring leader. There is need of some versatility to plan and carry into execution a scheme that will be profitable. But anybody with a fair amount of zeal, tact, and perseverance can do the church and the cause of missions good service by calling together such as are willing to reach out for more effective discipleship. Many a "shut-in" disciple could do this work for the master and forget herself in interest for others. The possibilities of such work are before the public, and the means to ends. The printed page, and the conference of workers over methods and results, have made the experience of one so fully the property of all, that only in the backwoods or in some Sleepy Hollow can be found the church that has not some one that knows how to begin and carry forward such a work. Such mission circles are desirable. Successful, they stimulate the immediately engaged; they keep the subject before the people; the leaven of their influence spreads; and already are they an immense power for good. The great danger is that lack of coöperation with pastor, superintendent, teacher, or leader will bring such movements to grief if attempted. One cannot do everything; but two or three even, whose hearts beat with that of an engaged pastor, and a reasonable coöperation of the membership, will secure, after a while, a great harvest.

Through these organizations, or by some other means, the current literature of missions should be secured, as far as possible, for every home. Probably a dollar and a half a year would secure to each home an equipment for an intelligent understanding of the work of the church in the wide field. And what a trifling expenditure that is, and what a return it brings, compared with the use made and the good gotten from many a dollar spent on cheap, or even good, secular literature. Seek first the kingdom, and begin to hunger to know how it fares in the world. Every parish should be canvassed for the missionary periodicals of the church. The outcome of these agencies should be:

First. More prayer and more intelligent prayer. This point needs frequent emphasis. It will not care for itself.

Second. That here and there one will be found coming forward to say, "Here am I; send me." No better result is possible. If the people are praying as the Master bids, making no selfish reservations, expecting that some of their own number will be prayed into the field, they will not long be content till they have some representative abroad. And should one be forthcoming, let the event be hailed as if, not a calamity, but a great honor had overtaken the one called. It will then be strange if another does not follow.

Third. That giving will be more generous, uniform, and rooted in principle. This, too, needs the help of wise method. A chapter might well be given to this. There is no better way than that of the weekly offering for pure benevolence, as an act of worship, considered as a main dependence, if only every man would set apart on the first day of the week, for sacred uses, a definite portion of his income. If to this he will add " as the Lord hath prospered him," great things will come of it. Anyhow, it is probable that a call for an offering in the name of the Master, each Lord's day, in his house, will bring out a greater aggregate of gifts than any other method. The method next best may be special offerings for the cause of missions, with sermon preceding, and slips for pledges on the spot, or sent with a brief appeal to each member, or a canvasser from house to house, to follow. We believe it far better, however, patiently to educate a people to voluntary and conscientious giving, as an act of worship when they enter God's house.

Local societies and bands have their own methods of membership fees, weekly or quarterly offerings, birth-day boxes for use in bands or Sunday-school class, and mission boxes to be always in sight at home, with their mute appeal, which interested children sometimes translate into language and draw a gift from a visitor or a friend. Choose the fittest of them. Most of our little folks depend upon the family treasury for their gifts. Earning money should in every right way be encouraged; and the success of some shows what might be done by many, if they would. Children's fairs, where is displayed the work of their hands for sale, the best thing they just now can do, may well be encouraged generously, both for the resulting fund and for the impulse given to the interest of young hearts, and the social opportunity afforded for acquaintance and good cheer.

One other way of investment seems too much neglected. Many a man who cannot go himself might readily undertake the entire support of one who can, or of one or more native teachers or preachers. Many a woman in the church might support a sister in Christ ready to go to the ends of the earth. Many, out of the pin-money of a year, might keep a mission school running a twelvemonth. Many a class or band might do that same thing. Something definite and large enough to call for some effort, put before one or half a dozen, how much it would do to increase the gifts and the interest of the givers. Oh, that we were awake to it!

Men and money! the great need, the only need, save the quickening spirit to give the increase. The church has both, far beyond all present noble use, squandered, now, so greatly, and that in the face of world-needs, so colossal, so urgent. How to get them is the question. Does the answer lie in getting closer to the Master? Let us learn to look with his eyes on the great field, and to feel as he felt, and to give in the spirit of his giving of himself, and our quickened wits and hearts will find or make effective methods.

NOTE.—Missionary boards publish cheap and good maps, also magazines, leaflets, sketches of missions, biographies, helps, to be had at little cost. "The Gospel in all Lands" and most denominational publications have outlooks on the wide field. The "Missionary Review" is reliable in statistics and information, not always unprejudiced, fair, and kind in spirit. The "Missionary Herald," March, 1880, and the "Foreign Missionary," May, 1885, have capital articles on the monthly concert. Of books for church and Sunday-school libraries, suitable for reference and quickening to read, "The Gospel in all Lands," October 5 and 26, 1882, gives a full catalogue. The Ely volume shows the bearings of missions on science, trade, the arts, and the diplomacy of nations.

X

MISSION WORK IN THE HOME FIELD

IN considering this problem it is necessary at the outset clearly to distinguish two analogous but different problems: that of church extension and that of town and city evangelization. A large part of our Christian energies have been expended on the first of these problems — church extension. Our aim has been to build up self-supporting churches, to extend our denomination, to make it larger numerically and stronger financially. This is a worthy end if not too exclusively pursued; but it is not mission work. And it is mission work, not church extension, that I propose to consider in this chapter. Nor is our question even how to get non-church-goers to go to church, though it involves that problem: it is how to get the Gospel into the hearts and lives of the non-church-goers. Getting them to go to church is one way, but it is not the only way. The two problems overlap each other; but they are not the same problem. Finally, the conditions in a rural community are so widely different from those in the cities and towns, that though the same principles apply, the same methods cannot be used. As the mission work is more difficult and most pressing in our towns, it is to that problem I address myself in these pages, leaving the principles here expounded to be applied by such methods as experience may indicate in the purely country parish.

The great difficulty in the way of mission work in the home field is the lack of a will to do it. Where there's a will there's a way. The problem is not so much to find a way as to create a will. The greatest difficulty lies inside the church, not outside. A great deal of discussion on this subject is expended in inquiring how to do it without doing it. We want to do Christian work without taking up our cross and following Christ; and that is impossible. How can we do a mission work in the home field without self-denial? The answer is simply, It cannot be done. Foreign missionary work not only can but must be done by proxy. Home missionary work not only must not but cannot be done by proxy. There is no way in which we can carry the Gospel to our home heathen except by carrying it to them. We cannot sit in our slippered ease in our own homes, and worship in our luxurious religious club-houses, which we call churches, and have our Christian self-denial done for us by Bible women, to whom we pay the same monthly wages we pay our cooks and chambermaids. If Christianity were a system of philosophy we could hire teachers to propagate it. But it is not a system of philosophy: it is a life, and life is not a marketable article. Life is self-propagating. Only life begets life. You cannot hire a city missionary to carry it about for you. Religion has no middle-men. The power of Christianity is the power of a Divine Personality. Christ communicates it to his followers; his followers must communicate it to others. "Lord, make us fishers of men." "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." "Nay, Lord, let me stay with my boat and my nets and still be a fisher of men." The minister preaches a home missionary sermon; the church-member drops a nickel in the contribution plate and repeats, with a difference, Isaiah's proffer, "Here, Lord, am I; send *him*." Christ asks for our services and we give him our sixpences. We not only try to buy substitutes, but we expect to get them very cheap. Christ has interpreted the meaning of "Follow me." He did not send the Gospel by a deputed missionary: he brought it himself. The difference between Christianity and all other religions is not ethical nor even theological: it is the incarnation. Christianity is truth in action; truth embodied in a life. The Son of God brings the life to earth; he does not send it. And then he bids us not only to receive it, but to carry it ourselves and by personal contact to others. Light and heat do not leap from torch to torch. The live torch must come in contact with the unkindled one in order to kindle it. While all piety remains in cultivated churches and impiety abides in the streets and the saloons, the piety will not be communicated. Either the churches must go out to the streets and the saloons, or the streets and saloons must be brought into the churches. I lay emphasis with reiteration on this simple truth, because, simple as it is, it seems to me to be ignored not only in our action, but in much of our discussion. We cannot keep all our electricity in Leyden jars and have it light the world. The church must be willing to lose its life in order to gain it. Whenever a church really possesses the spirit of Christ, whenever its members are willing on the one hand to welcome to their own fellowship those not of their "set," and on the other hand to go out of their "set" in order to come in personal contact with the publicans and sinners, they can always find a way to accomplish their purpose. What surprised the Pharisees was that Christ went in unto the publicans and sinners and ate with them. He associated with them on terms of social equality though of spiritual inequality. Whenever his disciples are willing to do as he did, they can accomplish his deeds; and never otherwise.

One other principle must be borne in mind in all mission work in home fields. The aim of society is not the individual: it is the family. A regiment is not made up of individuals, but of companies; a Christian society is not made up of individuals, but of households. The disintegration of Rome in the beginning of the Christian era, and of France in the close of the last century, was primarily due to causes which had disintegrated the household. The end of mission work must be the home. A Christian community can only be built of Christian homes. A mission hall with a leader singing, praying, speaking, and a perpetually shifting audience of tramps and vagabonds bear about the same relation to the spiritual edification of the community that a soup-house does to its permanent enrichment. Either may be a temporary necessity; but it is well in either case if the charity does not pauperize. Soup-house mission work is the poorest of all mission work. Society is an aggregation of crystals; the home is the crystal unit; without that, the crystallization cannot go on. Mission work in home fields therefore involves a great variety of problems. It involves Christianizing the landlords into giving such accommodations as will make home life feasible; it involves if not abolishing at least regulating the tenement house system; it involves teaching girls how to keep house, and so to become home-makers; it involves a resolute, determined, united, undying, uncompromising hostility to everything that threatens the integrity of the home: bad tenements, bad food, bad scenery, open liquor shops, free divorces. A great city, or even a moderately sized but compact town, cannot be waylaid by a Salvation Army, or city missions, or Bible women among the poor. This ought ye to have done, but not to have left the other undone.

These two principles, I believe, must be recognized and applied in all mission work in home fields: personal contact is the power; Christian households are the end. Where a church possesses richly the spirit indicated in the first statement, and sees clearly the object indicated in the second, it will always find methods open to it. In what follows I shall simply attempt to illustrate these principles in indicating some of the methods to which they will naturally if not inevitably lead.

First. The church which is possessed of a live missionary spirit will not attempt to establish a mission outside until it has exhausted its own church resources for missionary work. The aim should always be to make the home school a mission school, and the home church a mission church. It is not according to the law of God's kingdom that the rich saints should meet under one roof and the poor sinners under another. If I may quote from myself, we put all our dough in one pan, and all our yeast in another, and wonder that the dough does not rise. Geographical considerations sometimes compel such a division; merely social considerations never should be allowed to do so. The first step in mission work in the home field is to get the non-church-goer into the home church and the non-Sunday-school-goer into the home Sunday-school. Our Roman Catholic brethren teach us a lesson in this respect. They hold an early Mass for the servants and servant girls, and a later Mass for the masters and mistresses in the same church building. They have few or no mission chapels. On the mere ground of economy, it is an absurd waste to put from fifty thousand dollars to half a million in a church which is open only three hours in the week and full only for an hour and a half, and then to spend ten or twenty thousand more in building a chapel round the corner for "poor relations." The radical reform we really need, in many cases, is to put the church where it will be accessible to the poor, and let the rich drive to it in their carriages; but that day is so far off that it is idle to talk about it here. Without any such radical reform as that, we can make our churches a center of mission work where the rich and poor meet together, and recognize the Lord as maker of them both. Until very recently I have been inclined to suppose that the poor would not be welcomed in our rich churches; but a recent experience seems to demonstrate the error of that supposition. The "Christian Union" sent a reporter around to different wealthy and aristocratic churches in New York City: he was dressed shabbily as a working-man out of employment might have been; decent, but decidedly seedy. But he was everywhere welcomed and shown a good seat. The spirit of the churches is not lacking in that sort of negative hospitality which opens the door to one who knocks. But that is not enough. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," says Christ. If we are to follow his example, we must not wait for home heathen to knock at our doors; we must knock at theirs, and, if it be necessary, wait long and patiently for a "Come in."

Second. If we mean to make our churches home missionary churches, as every church ought to be, we must make the pews free. The question of the financial support of the church is a large question, doubtless discussed elsewhere in this volume. It must suffice to say here that we cannot expect the heathen to pay for their own conversion. The question is not whether the poor can afford to pay pew-rents, though in many cases they cannot. When the necessary expense of transportation, even in a street-car, of dress, in order to present a reputable appearance, and of pew-rent is taken into consideration, the church often becomes too expensive a luxury for the man who is earning only from eight hundred to a thousand dollars a year, to say nothing of the dollar-a-day man. The real question, however, is not one of pews, but one of character; it is not whether the poor can afford to pay pew rent, but whether the godless can be expected to do so. The question here discussed is not how to get poor and pious men into church, but how to get the Gospel into godless men. And the first step is to open our churches to the godless. Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye and buy wine and milk with thirty to three hundred dollars a year, is the modern church version of Isaiah's invitation. If the church cannot see its way to abolish pew rents altogether, let it abolish them for the second service. To say our pews are "practically free," there is plenty of room, every one is welcome, is not enough. They must be actually and literally free. A number of years ago I was walking with my little boy in New York City. "Papa, is this *our* church?" he said, as we went by it. "Yes," I replied. "And whose church is that?" asked he, as we presently came upon another. "That is Dr. Hastings' church," I replied. "And whose is that?" he asked, pointing across the square. "That is Mr. Frothingham's." He thought a moment, then startled me with the question, "Papa, where is God's church?" Sure enough; where is it? The pewed church is the property of a private corporation. It may welcome strangers, but they are still strangers. It is not God's church. When the pews are free, the church is usually full. Dr. Muhlenberg's church never lacked a crowded congregation. This was not wholly due to the fame of the pastor; for it has had less famous pastors since, and has always been full. When Dr. Rainsford took the rectorship of St. George's in New York City, it was on condition that the pews should be free. The sparse congregation of wealthy worshipers has changed into a throng which fills the large church almost to its utmost capacity. Dr. Rainsford is, it is true, a most effective preacher; but not more eloquent than many a man who preaches to half-filled owned or rented pews. The Methodist churches throughout the country are, as a rule, the missionary churches of their vicinage; their pews are, as a rule, free. I recall three churches within my personal knowledge, two of which are wealthy and aristocratic, where evening congregations have been made measurably large, multiplied three or four fold, in one case by tenfold, without a change of pastor, since the pews were made free. Making the pews free did not alone accomplish it; but making the pews free, and the spirit in pastor and people which that change indicated, did accomplish it.

Third. Merely opening the doors, however, is not enough. The church that means to do a missionary work in its home field must go out into the highways and hedges and compel the people to come in; and that word *compel*, which is our Lord's, indicates that this requires patience, persistent effort under various discouragement. It is not true that the heart of man resists all enticement to goodness; but it is true that it does not seek for it as for hid treasure. Open a liquor shop, and the customers will swarm in; open a school, a reading-room, or a church, and they must be brought in. Dr. Strong, of Cincinnati, in a church in the most discouraging location in that most discouraging of cities, with open liquor shops and theaters all about him, brought his Sabbath evening congregation up from twenty-five to two hundred and fifty by making the seats free and organizing a force of young men who went out half an hour or so before service and invited the loungers on the streets to come with them to their church. Neither free pews without an invitation nor an invitation to a mission would have had any such success. This is one method, but it is only one of many. I know a clergyman who, going to a manufacturing town, within a week or two after his arrival overtook a small boy wheeling a heavy wheel-barrow-load along the sidewalk and stopped at the curbstone. He put his ministerial dignity in his pocket, took the wheelbarrow from the boy, wheeled it home for him, invited him to the church Sunday-school, and — to make a long story short — in three months' time had his church well filled with working-people and his Sunday-school with their children. There is no one method of compelling them to come in. The church chimes ring many tunes; but they all say, Come, and welcome.

The best of all ways, however, to get a family into church is to get the children into Sunday-school; the quickest way to get the Gospel into old hearts is to get it into the hearts of the children. All permanent mission work in the home field has been connected with and most of it has grown out of mission work among the children. This opens the whole subject of Sunday-school work, a subject too large to be entered on here. It must suffice to say that if the family is the unit and the

Christian home is the end of Christian missions, the nearer we can get to the cradle in our work the quicker we shall get that work accomplished. "A little child shall lead them."

These suggestions may seem somewhat commonplace to my readers; but the truth is that there are no novel methods for carrying the Gospel to our home heathen. What we need is not new methods, but newness of spirit. When that spirit is in the heart of the pastor and his people; when they have the heart of Him who came to seek as well as to save that which was lost; when they regard the church as a missionary organization, and no church a true church of Christ that has not a missionary spirit in it; when they count their wealth not by the dollars in the treasury, but by the souls in the congregation and the spiritual life in the church,—when the church ceases to be a social organization with a lecture platform at one end and a social concert at the other, and becomes a worshiping and working organization, in which the spirit of a living and life-giving Christ is again incarnate, the will to do will find a way to do, and the church will no longer be perplexed by the problem of its mission work in the home field.

XI

EVANGELISTIC WORK

THAT an evangelizing church is what Christ wants cannot be doubted. His last commission implies that we are not only to send the Gospel to all men, but are to send it home to them with such pungency and power as to make disciples of them. One of the important ends of a church is to make Christians. It is to help people to a clear and vital faith in Christ, and bring them to the point of confessing their faith by openly enlisting in the service of Christ. It is important, therefore, that a church should keep constantly before it the fact that the work of ingathering is its first duty; afterward comes the work of training, upbuilding, and directing in ways of usefulness.

A deeply evangelistic spirit, then, should pervade its ordinary and regular work. It should be watching and working for souls continually. It must take care not to make religion a luxury, and not to let the æsthetics of the church become anæsthetics. A company of worshipers may easily become so intent on merely pleasing themselves, that their spiritual powers are benumbed and their spiritual effectiveness destroyed. But this will not be apt to occur if both pastor and people have their hearts set upon making disciples. The sermons, while not neglecting other phases of instruction, will aim at constant conversions. The Sunday-school and social meetings will be harvest-fields, where the good seed is expected to produce ripe grain, and where the sickle is often thrust in to garner the sheaves. If the field be faithfully worked for ingatherings, it will yield constant returns.

An evangelizing church, however, will not be satisfied with work done for the select circle of its regular attendants alone. In every community there is a large floating population, having no close connection with any church, and yet quite susceptible to the influences which an aggressive and thoroughly earnest church may bring to bear upon it. Some churches have, with good success, transformed the Sunday evening meeting into a special evangelistic service to attract and benefit this class. The seats are made free to all; attentive and courteous ushers give a hearty welcome to all, and conduct them to the best seats to be had; the church-members take pains to show a cordial sympathy with their guests, and to make them feel entirely at home. The opening half-hour is chiefly a service of song, and consists largely of those spirited, tender, and melodious religious ballads that we call "Gospel Songs." Sometimes a single impressive voice sends home the Gospel message by a solo; again, the large chorus of fresh, vigorous voices unites in some rousing song with a stirring refrain, or leads the whole congregation in a familiar hymn. Interspersed with these abundant songs are brief Scripture readings and prayers. When the sermon comes, it is a short, direct, and amply illustrated address on practical religion, setting forth those fundamental truths that lie at the very threshold of the Christian life, and setting them forth so vividly as to move men to feeling and action. The main service of the evening is followed by an after-meeting for testimonies, prayer, and personal appeal on the part of Christians. And the "drawing of the net" in the after-meeting often discloses the fact that several have been brought to a decision to enter earnestly upon a Christian life by the services of the evening.

But experience shows that there are periods when the interest in religion is much greater than at other times. There are seasons when the tide of feeling rises higher, and the motives to action are more deeply felt than usual. In ordinary times there are many who seem to be at the very entrance of the Christian life, but are not quite able to make the port. They are aground upon some sand-bar of petty objection, or becalmed by lack of feeling, or they beat up and down in the offing in unhappy indecision. But when the tide rises, and the favoring breeze begins to blow, these stick-fasts and waverers are easily brought into the harbor.

The church should welcome these periodic revival occasions when they come naturally, as affording it a special opportunity for its proper work. Sometimes, indeed, these occasions have been abused by ignorant and unwise leaders. Sometimes they have used exaggerated statements of doctrines or gross sensationism to stampede men into the kingdom of Heaven under a panic of fear or through the common impulse of the crowd. The result is an explosion of passional excitement rather than a genuine arousing of the religious nature. And the reaction that follows such a spurious work brings a deep distaste for religion, and a greater unwillingness to listen to its appeals and engage in its duties. We need to be on our guard against any such misuse of the opportunity.

But there is no need of any such extravagance or undue excitement in these special evangelizing seasons. They have been approved and successfully used by many of the ablest and wisest leaders in the church. Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, Dr. Edward N. Kirk and President Finney, were conspicuous for learning, intellectual power, and practical sagacity, and they were all famous revivalists. Newell, Judson, Rice, Mills, the pioneers of our great modern missionary movement, were the fruits of a revival, and regarded this as one of the chief agencies for converting the world. The best modern evangelists handle the truth of Scripture with soberness and with rare practical wisdom, and make only legitimate appeals to the emotions. Dr. Albert Barnes insisted upon the entire naturalness of this method, when wisely used, saying: "Take the case of a single true conversion to God, and extend it to a community, to *many* individuals passing through that change, and you have all the theory of a revival of religion. It is bringing together many conversions; arresting simultaneously many minds; perhaps condensing into a single place, and into a few weeks, the ordinary work of many distant places and many years."

No work is more germane to the true object of a church than that which seeks to develop this special interest. What is the end aimed at? It is to concentrate the thought of a community upon the sublime and eternal realities of the spiritual life. It is to get men to see more vividly, and feel more intensely, the supreme needs of the soul, and to understand the provision which God has made for those needs. If they will but halt in their business or pleasure long enough to see distinctly the momentous truths implied in the word salvation, the sight will develop a motive power in the heart that will bring them to Christ. The church furnishes the occasion and the opportunity for this by such special evangelistic services.

A fit time for such special effort should be sought, which is likely to be most favorable for enlisting the attention and interest of people. Undoubtedly the Holy Spirit can move upon the hearts of men in the summer as well as in the winter; but as a matter of fact more conversions occur in the cooler months, and the winter and spring are apt to be the climax of the year in this regard. There are certain weeks which circumstances seem to make specially suitable for the inauguration of such efforts. The "week of prayer" at the very opening of the year being set apart, by common consent of a large part of the Christian world, for special devotional services, has often been turned to good account by making its meetings evangelistic in character. The interest thus awakened has been deepened and extended by continuing the meetings till the entire month and sometimes the whole midwinter season has become a Pentecostal time, with many conversions. Perhaps a period even more favorable for such a service is the Lenten season, when abstention from gayety and pleasures on the part of a large portion of the Christian world induces a social quiet and thoughtfulness, which is peculiarly suited to the introduction of religious themes. The attention of men is more easily arrested then; there are fewer diversions to distract their thoughts when once turned to these momentous questions; and the sacred and touching events in the life of our Saviour which are associated with the observance of this season render it a particularly fitting and impressive time for evangelistic meetings. The very days speak of penitence, of consecration, and of grateful devotion to Christ. If the non-liturgical churches should all, with one consent, unite in making Lent a period for special evangelistic meetings, it can hardly be doubted that multitudes of conversions would result.

The success of such meetings will depend much upon careful and thorough preparation for them. The entire Christian force of the church ought to be enlisted in active coöperation for the work. A preliminary visitation of the entire membership of the church is often useful, to inform each one of the work in prospect, and to pledge the presence and active service of each one in the meetings. Meetings for prayer and reconsecration, and the study of such truths as are specially pertinent to the work should be held, in order that the church itself may approach the effort for soul-winning with a great glow of interest and expectation, and readiness for service.

Shall an evangelist be called in? Sometimes this will not be necessary. Where the pastor has but recently entered on the field, and his voice and method have still a fresh interest to the people, it is wiser to have the work carried on by the pastor and people by themselves. It is then but the natural development of the regular work. But sometimes the pastor feels that he has no gift for this special work; or that a new voice and method for the occasion would, on account of its novelty, awaken new interest; or in a union effort, in which several churches unite, no one of the pastors likes to assume direction of it. There should then be no hesitation about calling in a neighboring pastor for the occasion, or an evangelist whose gifts and experience specially adapt him for such work. The pastor or pastors are then left free for direct pastoral work. Care should be taken in selecting an evangelist to secure a sound, sensible, spiritual man, whose fervid emotions are well balanced by practical wisdom and an unselfish spirit.

Those who have had unusual success in such meetings, like Mr. Moody, lay great stress upon the singing. This melts the icy hearts, and breaks up the hard crust of indifference, and gets the soil ready for the good seed of the Word. It is of great assistance to have one singer whose rendering of the tender, persuasive, and heart-moving songs can thrill all hearers. But a large, vigorous chorus is also much to be desired for the spirited and effective rendering of other songs. And much of the singing should be by the entire congregation, and should be such as they enjoy and will join in heartily. Care should be taken, however, not to employ words or music which are either trivial or mere gushing sentimentalism.

At every stage in the movement success will turn largely on the readiness of church members for the work. If they seize promptly every opportunity for usefulness, the work will go forward with strength. As Dr. Cuyler says, the great need is "more sermons in shoes." They must be ready to go out with cordial invitations and bring people to the meetings; be prompt and regular in their own attendance; be attentive and hospitable toward the strangers who come; join heartily in the singing; be alert to offer a word of Scripture, testimony, a prayer when needed; be quick to note and encourage any sign of interest in others; be ready with personal conversation to help into the light those struggling toward it; in short, be minute-men, prompt to render every service needed to make the effort a success. Live Christians make live meetings. The contagion of their enthusiastic devotion will spread; the fire in their hearts will kindle many others.

Do not protract these special meetings till the people are worn out. It is a mistake to hold on till pastor, church, and community are all exhausted. It is better to stop while the interest is at flood-tide, and then carry the evangelistic spirit awakened into the regular meetings and works of the church.

XII

THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY CHURCHES

CERTAIN faults and defects are largely peculiar to country churches. If we of the country are called to the confessional, we must confess that we, very possibly more than others, have failed to entertain a sufficiently high and true conception of the church — what it is for. And this is our great, inclusive need, to gain in this respect a true ideal. We have perhaps regarded the church too much as a safe receptacle for the quiet repose of souls rather than as an engine for the accomplishment of a purpose — a combination of personal energies in order to a vast and ever widening work. Accordingly, we of the rural districts are too apt to think of our churches as something to be kept in existence, rather than to be kept on the increase. We hardly realize that every church of Christ has a legitimate right to win a noble and increasing predominance in the community to which it ministers: that Christ has a right to every human soul in that community, and that the church is his appointed agent to win every soul. We are too prone to view the church as a humble pensioner upon the community, hat in hand, begging to be supported. What we need is to see in the church the divine institution which is to bestow upon men the greatest of gifts, and which lays men under obligation: which seeks not honor from men, but rather confers honor.

We need this high ideal of the church, in order to the best result in our local work. Not a begging church, but a giving church, will command victory. But not alone for our home work do we need this. Our king has a great, world-wide campaign on hand. As the mountain spring is to the mighty river that sweeps toward the sea, so the local church should be to the great onward movement of Christ's cause in the wide world: a source of helpful supply, according to its ability. We need to conceive of the church in this way. It is the King's recruiting station. It is his dépôt of supplies. It is to win for him at home, that it may have wherewith eagerly to help on the work abroad, till the kingdoms of this world are merged in the kingdom of our Lord.

From our circumstances, we of the country are liable to fall short of this needful ideal of the church. In the city it may be otherwise. The bounding life of the city, the commonness of vast enterprises, the visible and tangible bigness of things in hand, the instant converse with all the broad world,— all this ought to make it easy for the urban Christian to entertain correspondingly grand conceptions of the church and its work. But in the country our horizon is narrower. Our undertakings are on no gigantic scale. The results of our material labor, though immense in aggregate, are wrought so nearly in the silence of nature's work that there is no startling or broadening effect upon the mind. As we do not even observe the titanic energy which beneath our very eyes is heaving toward the sky the almost infinite weight of the season's growth, so we do not note the immensity of the results of our own labor in tilling the soil. We are occupied with little things. The effect is — unless, forewarned, we exert ourselves to the contrary — that all our ideas are narrowed.

To prevent this, we need to study day by day the progress of the work of Christ at large. We can only do this by taking and reading the religious periodicals — a thing now all but universally neglected in country churches. We are proud to say that the periodicals that tell of farming and stock-growing are on our farm-house tables. We find time also to attend the farmer's institute, and enjoy the spicy teaching of the men who take a broad view of agriculture. Fashion monthlies we must also have, or there would be no peace at home. The county paper, too, with patent insides, often two or three such. We must have the gossip of the county, of course. Of late we are even taking the daily from our neighboring city. It would hardly do to let the base-ball match get away. And if we should fail to keep informed as to each day's cyclones, floods, fires, robberies, murders, or lose the sanguinary particulars, why, life would be dreary enough. But when it comes to knowing what the King of kings is doing in the world, a great many of us have a stock of excuses ready.

"We take so many papers already, we get no time to read them." "Two dollars and a half a year! Why, we can get as big a paper for a dollar and a quarter!" [And what do we care if the cheap paper does steal nearly all its material?] "Three dollars? 'Missionary Herald?' 'Home Missionary?' Why, you must think we are made of money!" And so we do not know what the Lord is doing; do not keep the run of the war. Our souls have no chance to catch the sacred fire. We never get above our acres, our crops, and our stock. Not realizing that we and our little churches are part of God's great army that is conquering the world, we are liable to grow petty, complaining, fussy, critical, quarrelsome, childish. Our work as Christians is nought. The local church grows down-hill, and the weaker it becomes the harder it is to harmonize.

We need to reform ourselves, that we may become broader in our ideas and warmer in our sympathies. If we do not want every mean and childish and weedy quality of our human nature to grow up and go to seed, we need to get our eyes fixed on objects that are worth while. But all this is only to say again, we need a larger and truer idea of the church of Christ and of its work.

Second. We confess, that in close connection with this, we greatly need enlarged ideas as to *giving*.

If the church is intended to grow and win, the means must be supplied accordingly. The opposite theory seems often to prevail, that only enough is to be provided barely to keep the church alive. How pitiful! when the Lord intends his church both to grow stronger and, over and above, to supply its quota for the work at large.

Just here, undeniably, we of the country do, as a whole, sadly come short. The fault is not confined to our church-work. It is prevalent in all departments of country life. Wise educators have long proclaimed the fact that township districts are starving the country children in the matter of learning. Rarely will a rural community consent to tax itself sufficiently to bring its schools anywhere near the quality of those in the towns and cities. When did a country township ever consent to a tax sufficient to make roads that should be good the year round? With some exceptions in favor of certain localities, it must be said that improvements that cost money come, in the country, only by the hardest. The most popular trustee or commissioner is apt to be the man who, by whatever means, "brings down the taxes." *To contribute less than at present to the public welfare* seems to many of us in the country to be a "consummation devoutly to be wished." In civil matters the law stands in the way of our reaching the delightful ultimatum of giving absolutely nothing. Conscience in some degree prevents our reaching that point, as to giving for religious purposes. But already very many outside the church, and not a few within, have been able, in the absence of law, and in spite of a feeble conscience, to reduce their giving so nearly to nothing, that there is literally "no fun in it." Some church-members, even, give nothing. Many give next to nothing. Most of us give not at all "as the Lord hath prospered us." It is pleasant to say that a few do give nobly and freely, and that some even give as did the queen of all givers, "two mites which make a farthing." It may be but their small gift is "all their living." Yes, some of the grandest giving is from the country. Still as a rule our ideas of giving are far too limited. We seldom give with anything of that boldness and audacity which belong no less to a vivid faith than to a wise foresight. In many instances we starve ourselves spiritually, and convert our children into muck-rakes; we starve the church, we make our rural communities not worth living in, we drive away the best elements of society — by looking not how we may continually increase our giving, but how we may lessen it. We accordingly suffer in many ways, of which some may be mentioned.

We suffer from frequent changes in the pastorate. We are not willing to give, continuously, enough to make sure of the support of a good pastor, without a demoralizing dependence on the world. We calculate on the support of those not only not Christians, but who never darken the church doors, or do so only when "a new man" arrives. While the new man is new, this worldly element will assist. If he is faithful he will reprove sin, and the interest of this class will wane. He is not so liberal as they hoped. By the second or third year it is hard to raise the salary: then it becomes "impossible." The pastor perhaps waits for this. But most, if possessed of self-respect, do not. They go before this point is reached. Then the "Rev. Interregnum" succeeds. The church runs down. Everything becomes dead. At last, in very fright, the effort is made, and a new pastor is secured, to pass through the same experience. Now there are very few churches so weak that they need to depend in any such way upon the world. There are a few, but such should be helped by the whole body of churches.

Most of our country churches are able to support their ministry so well that the giving or not giving of outsiders might be a mere incidental thing — sought, not for the church's sake nor the pastor's, but for the sake of the givers themselves. When the church-members give as the best of them now give, we shall have sufficiently long and fruitful pastorates. Nor is this mere assertion, but the result of careful studies, which time does not permit us to explain. That many of our country churches are not extinct under the treatment received from their own members is a proof of God's great mercy.

Again, we insure defeat in many instances by penuriously refusing to supply proper and improved appliances for church work. It is not so with our farms. We thresh and saw wood by steam; sow our grain with a costly "seeder"; cut our grain with a "twine-binder"; plow with a beautiful implement that would have seemed a miracle to our fathers. We know that it does not pay to farm to-day with awkward, obsolete tools.

How is it with our Christian husbandry? Are not many of us, in church matters, plowing with a wooden mold-board, using a straight-snath scythe, reaping with no better tool than the old back-ache sickle? In other words, do we not forget that we are in the last quarter of the wondrous nineteenth century, and that church work demands new and improved appliances, like all other departments of work? Some of us are content with church buildings which are mere wooden plows — cumbersome, ugly, and not at all adapted to the work. You might often look in a country village or hamlet for the most repulsive building (of any pretension), and find it the church, which ought to be the most beautiful. Look at such a church! The front of it cries out against every canon of good taste. The great staring windows say plainly, "There's nothing inside." Shabby, and weathered, and down-at-the-heel, yet that building represents Christianity! Christianity built it, and seems content with it! And when the people have their cosy, adorned, modern houses and enter the dread abode of religion, their eyes are met by ugliness still. Seats that have to be wrestled with, walls mottled and leprous-looking, plaster cracked and smoky, ventilation wanting; chilliness in winter, intense heat in summer, stridulous worn out reed organ, the despair of the choir; poor hymn-books, probably not half enough. No Bibles. Lamps — the less said of them the better; they have ruined the text about the droppings of the sanctuary. No proper rooms for the different requirements of modern church work. We build additional barns and sheds for our farms, till we have enough for their proper needs. But we do not add to our church the rooms without which a properly conducted infant class, Bible class, prayer meeting or inquiry meeting are well-nigh impossible. We build box-stalls for our horses — they are valuable; and we tie up our prayer meeting in the corner of the church,— I had almost said barn,— where all the old windows rattle their teeth at them, and the chill of the grave steals over them. And then, week after week, we claim the promise for the "*two or three* that are gathered together," and lament that so few "come to the solemn feast of Zion." And we wonder that our boys and girls eagerly break away and go to the city, forgetting that by this penurious neglect we have been bidding high for the contempt of the world and the alienation of our own children; bidding high for the increase of the non-church-going class, already so large. A right idea of the church and large giving would cure these evils; would provide tasteful — not costly — churches, with rooms for the different uses, good organs, instruction in church music; Bibles and hymn-books; sufficient support for a permanent pastor, of abundant ability; and would provide for any remaining want.

Third. We need willingness, earnestness, and skill in individual Christian work. Country Christians are beset with one of the snares of the devil, which he teaches them to call bashfulness; but in truth there are many strands in this snare, of which real bashfulness is the smallest. The others are hidden, such as pride, spiritual indolence, and the like. The snare is upon our limbs, and across our lips. We can't rise up to speak, we can't kneel down to pray. When we meet a friend we can't open our lips about Christ! Yet how few are ever converted without the personal effort! Rarely by a sermon, hymn, or prayer—almost always these must be supplemented by the word of a friend. The church whose members excel in willingness, earnestness, and skill in personal effort will be a growing church. Let there be a degree of purity, uprightness, and kindness sufficient to win general confidence from those without, and little else is wanting but this willingness, earnestness, and skill in simple conversational work. Without these, or with only a spasmodical exhibition of them, there will at best be very slow growth. The death rate and the removal rate will chase hard after the church that lacks these qualifications.

But for this we still need the high and true ideal of the church. The old-time militia companies of my father's day would not take hold in earnest to learn the tactics. They knew there was no adequate reason for learning. But as soon as the first gun was heard at Fort Sumter, the whole nation became willing, earnest, and presently skillful in the use of arms. So, let us all understand and feel the import of the church and its work, and we shall gain these qualifications speedily. And it cannot be too strongly urged, that this is the focal point in which all our needs converge. Here, in this personal work, all our ideas are to be reduced to practice; all our high conceptions, all our liberal giving, all our wise providing, are in order to the exercise, under the best conditions possible, of this personal power. As all the arrangements and provisions for an army are in order that every soldier may fight effectually as an individual, so here: all for this personal willingness, earnestness, and skill. These are what win the battle.

XIII

SOCIETIES OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

PERHAPS the purpose and design of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor can in no way be better set forth than by explaining its origin. It was established in the Williston Congregational Church, of Portland, Maine, in February, 1881, in consequence of a revival of religion, which had been especially fruitful in its results among the young people and children. The pastor felt the importance of securing an intimate bond of connection between these young people who had given evidence of conversion and the church, and of giving them each some definite Christian work to perform at the very beginning of their new life.

It was an old problem that demanded solution, but a most vital one. There was no agency in his church, nor, so far as he knew, in other churches, for the accomplishment of just this work. The usual machinery of the Sunday-school, the young people's prayer-meeting, the church prayer-meeting, and the Sunday services was, to be sure, in active and helpful operation; but there was nothing which seemed to fill just the present need, the training which should correspond in some degree to the industrial training of the day in secular pursuits, and fit the young converts *by work, for work* in the church of God. Such training seemed to be especially necessary, as some of the young Christians were considered by their parents, and perhaps by the church, as too young and inexperienced for church-membership, and a practical probation of many months was before each.

To provide a half-way house to the church, for those who could not at once enter into full membership, and to provide a practical training school for young Christians already in the church, or about to join, was the Society of Christian Endeavor established. The period between conversion and church-membership is a critical one, and the gap is often wide. The number of those who, as they say, once "experienced religion," and yet have made no public confession of their faith, is surprisingly large, and it happens almost invariably that such, as far as any real influence goes, are practically lost to the cause of Christ. The experience of several years proves that this society successfully bridges this dangerous gap, and keeps the young people in active service until the duties and obligations of church-membership can be laid upon them.

At the very outset it makes plain the distinction between those who are Christians and those who are not.

The members are divided into two classes, the active and the associate. The active members are those who hope that they are Christians, and are willing to assume the duties of Christian discipleship. The associate members are those who are not as yet willing to be considered decided Christians, but who are desirous to be associated with Christians, and these are expected habitually to attend the meetings. Thus, at the very beginning the question is fairly and definitely presented to every young person: "Am I, or am I not, willing to be known as a decided Christian?" This proves to be the "valley of decision" for many, and the simple act of joining the society, with the choice which it involves, has been often the beginning of the new life.

The methods by which the society attempts to accomplish its mission as a half-way house to the church and a training school in and for the church are, briefly, the prayer-meeting and the committees. The weekly prayer-meeting is the center from which the good influences radiate. All active members of the society, when they join, voluntarily promise to attend every weekly prayer-meeting, "unless detained by some absolute necessity," and also to participate in every meeting, in some brief way, if it is only by the recitation of a verse of Scripture. This voluntary pledge is the life of the society. Abundant experience has proved that there is usually little growth in grace without expression. Frequent public acknowledgment of Christ is not Christian living, but it almost invariably accompanies the highest type of devotion and service. The weekly meetings furnish an appropriate and easy channel for this frequent confession. The solemn obligations, voluntarily assumed, give tangible shape to the tacit obligation which rests upon every Christian to "stand up for Jesus"; the presence of other young people is not a hindrance but a help, since all the active members are bound by the same vows, and before long the simple and natural utterance of love to Christ becomes as natural as before were constraint and silence. It is not the design or tendency of the society to make prayer-meeting speech-makers. Long speeches and long prayers are not regarded with favor, when there are many whose desire and duty it is to take some part.

A verse of Scripture or a stanza of a hymn, reverently uttered, and expressing the heart's feelings, is considered an ample fulfillment of the prayer-meeting obligation, and in no case have we known blatant and self-conceited attempts at oratory to be encouraged by these meetings.

Another feature of the prayer-meetings is the monthly experience or consecration meeting. This is usually held on the last prayer-meeting evening of the month, and the thoughts of the assembly are directed to a review of the past month, and to the need of consecration for future service. No well-rounded experience is expected or desired of the young converts at these monthly meetings. It is fully recognized that the experience of most Christians is a very fragmentary and imperfect matter, but it is well for every one, young and old, once in a while to turn his thoughts backward with the question: "Have I been honoring my Saviour and growing in grace during the past month?" And also to look forward after the retrospect with the thought: "Is my purpose to live nearer to Him in the future?"

Young people are not apt to be over-introspective, and nothing but good has been found to result from this look backward and forward. In this meeting, too, the simplest verse of Scripture, if it expresses the heart's experience or desires, is considered fully to meet the requirements of the prayer-meeting pledge.

At the close of this monthly meeting the roll of active members is called, and the simple answer, "Present," is considered a new act of acknowledgment that those who respond are on Christ's side. If any active member is necessarily absent from this meeting he is expected to send an excuse by some one who attends. Thus no week goes by without giving the young Christian a chance, which he has promised to improve, to show his colors; and no month goes by without giving him an opportunity, regularly provided for this purpose, to review the past, and learn from this experience lessons for future service.

The restraining influence of these constantly recurring seasons can hardly be overestimated. The boy who, with sincerity, renewed his allegiance to Christ on Tuesday will not be as likely to fall into temptation on Wednesday. The thought of the reviewing hour which will come with the monthly consecration meeting will prevent many a foolish and sinful escapade in the four weeks between these meetings.

But the prayer-meeting is only one arm of the Society of Christian Endeavor. All confession and no active service might not promote the soundest spiritual health, but frequent *confession* of Christ, balanced by constant *work* for Christ, can scarcely fail to make the well-rounded, symmetrical disciple. The other arm, then, of the societies is the working committees. These committees usually consist of five members each; their number varies from three to eight or nine; they are usually changed every six months, so that all the members of even a large society are before long given a definite and specific work to do. One of the duties of the committees, also, is to set others who do not happen to be on any committee at work, so that by this method is sought to solve the great question of raising up a generation of working Christians as well as confessing Christians. The most important committees are perhaps the "look-out," the "prayer-meeting," and the "social" committees. The first has particularly for its duties to know, so far as the weekly prayer-meeting reveals it, concerning the fidelity and growth of each member. If any are absent from two or three meetings, and especially the roll-call meeting, the look-out committee finds out the reason why. If any habitually disregard their prayer-meeting pledge, the look-out committee interviews them, and in a "kindly and brotherly way" reminds them of their duty; if any forget the proprieties of the prayer-meeting, it is in order for the look-out committee to give them a hint which shall lead to better behavior. It is the duty, the business, of this committee to do these things, and no one can take offense at a committee, created by their own votes, which simply does its duty. Of course, there should be on this committee always some of the older and more level-headed of the young people; but, thus constituted, it is of inestimable service to the pastor and the church.

The prayer-meeting committee has the topics and leaders of the weekly prayer-meeting to provide. These topics, for a series of weeks, are usually printed; and sometimes daily Bible readings, bearing upon the subject, are also provided. This committee can also do much in stimulating faithfulness to the prayer-meeting pledge by providing the younger ones with verses, or encouraging them when the time comes to take their little part.

It is not forgotten that young people are social beings, and to provide for all legitimate demands in this direction is the "Social Committee" constituted. Its duty is to promote the mutual acquaintance and enjoyment of the young people in a social way. They are to be on the alert to find out strangers, and to make them feel at home. They are to provide occasional social gatherings for the members and others who may be invited, at which any entertainment of which the church approves may be introduced. It is hoped that something may be done through these committees toward the solution of the much vexed "amusement question," by surrounding the young people with a pure social atmosphere, and thus counteracting vicious pleasures with reasonable and healthful ones — in short, overcoming evil with good.

These three committees every society of Christian Endeavor must have, while the list may be extended almost indefinitely, in accordance with local needs. As a matter of fact, most societies have some or all of the following committees: Sunday-school, Calling, Relief, Music, Missionary, Flower, Temperance, and White Cross. Their duties can be surmised in many cases from their names; and, for the most part, they will be found explained in the model constitutions and by-laws.

A tendency toward too much parliamentary law and embryo statesmanship may be developed in some quarters. It is unfortunate for the society to partake in any degree of the nature of a debating society, hence it is well also to have an executive committee composed of the officers and chairmen of committees, with the pastor of the church, to whom matters of business requiring debate shall be presented, and who shall, with recommendations, present these matters to the society for final action. Thus wordy discussion, sure to kill the spirit of a prayer-meeting, is kept out, and the necessary business which comes before the members is reduced to a minimum.

It is evident that regulations will not enforce themselves. Even among those who have the best intention, there must be certain sanctions. In the Society of Christian Endeavor this is provided for by the dropping of members who are unfaithful to their pledge. If any active member is absent from three consecutive monthly consecration meetings without sending an excuse, having been reminded in the meantime of his negligence by the Look-out Committee, he is dropped from the list, and ceases to be an active member. Thus the society is constantly self-weeded of those who are willfully careless concerning their vows, and the active membership list continues to consist only of active members. To prompt to faithfulness on the part of the committees, a written report is required at the end of each month of the work done during the past four weeks. This written report is found to be a great stimulus to faithful effort.

It has been the design of the leaders in this movement from the beginning to keep the society near the church. In fact, it is the church working in and through and for its young people. The relationship is as intimate and vital as of the infant department of the Sunday-school to the main school. No sign of pulling away from the church has been observed, unless the pastor or older church-members have been disposed to look with distrust and suspicion upon the young people. To secure this close relationship, the model constitution provides that "the pastor, deacons, elders or stewards, and Sunday-school superintendents shall be, *ex officiis*, honorary members, and any difficult questions may be laid before them for advice."

As a practical fact, most of them who belong to these societies are between ten and thirty-five years of age, though there is no rule debarring older ones, if their hearts are young; and, to provide for those who are constantly growing older and must some time graduate, a class of "affiliated members" has been formed in some societies.

These affiliated members still have a formal connection with the society, are interested in its efforts, but are excused from the stringent observance of the prayer-meeting rules by reason of increasing years, frequent necessary absence, or absorption in forms of Christian effort. It is meant chiefly as a sort of graduated class for those who have done good service in the society, and who can no longer perform the duties of active members.

It will readily be seen that around this central agency the pastor may group whatever forms of Christian activity he chooses. Instead of having half a dozen children's circles and bands for missionary, temperance, or benevolent effort, he can have as many committees as he chooses, each responsible to the same society.

The pastor's presence and kindly oversight are indispensable to the best success of such a society. It is not a labor-saving machine for Christian nurture, but it does give the wise and devoted pastor a natural channel for systematic work among his young people, where it will do the most good. By means of this society he may know how his young people are advancing from week to week, and may keep a loving hand on the shoulder of every one of them.

"This is an ideal plan for Christian training — if it will only work," said a wise and successful teacher of the young.

We have the satisfaction of knowing, after more than five years of trial, that it does "work." Starting with one society in 1881, there are now (in the summer of 1886) more than a thousand of these societies known to exist, with about sixty thousand members. They are limited by no denominational or geographical bounds, being found in all the evangelical denominations, in nearly all the states and territories. To missionary work they seem especially well adapted, and glowing accounts of the good work already accomplished in many heathen lands have been received. Emphatic testimony to their value is given by many of the most eminent and conservative pastors in the country. In a single conference year, 1885 and 1886, these societies trebled in numbers. In that year three thousand young people from these societies were known to have joined the evangelical churches of our country. This number means about one in six of those not already church members, whereas the average annual gain in many of our denominations is about one to every fifty church-members. May this society help to solve the great question of Christian motive, and hasten the time when Jerusalem shall be "full of boys and girls!"

XIV

BROAD CHURCH OR NARROW CHURCH?

THE question is not about the creed but about the life of the church. Shall it be broad or narrow? Some churches profess a broad creed and live a narrow life; others are less tolerant in their belief than they ought to be, yet their work is ample. What shall we say of the function of the church? How large is it? What does it include?

To these questions we shall get a variety of answers. Some persons seem to regard the church as a mutual insurance company, whose members have clubbed together to secure themselves against the loss of their souls. Others would define it as a close corporation of pew-holders, owning an assembly room in which, once a week, they meet in full dress to listen to a rehearsal of music and a literary lecture. Others consider the church as a hospital into which all manner of spiritually sick and feeble folk are gathered, and the minister as the doctor or the dry-nurse, to whose care they are intrusted. Some of the patients want stimulants, others want sedatives, others want tonics; but all of them want a good deal of care and nursing. If they do not improve, that is the doctor's fault: they are in his hands. It is by no means certain that they take his medicines according to directions given; but whether they do or not, he must bear the responsibility of their condition.

Such views as these of the office of the church are unquestionably narrow. They are not often avowed. We only infer from the conduct of church-members that they are widely held. It may be a question, however, whether good people in all the churches do not set too narrow a bound to the activities of the church. Is not the proper work of the church ampler and more inclusive than most people think?

The church is a brotherhood of Christian disciples organized for Christian work. As disciples, they desire to be taught, and therefore the first and most important function of the church is that of teaching. Worship is united with instruction in the public services of the Lord's house; and worship is entitled to a higher place than has sometimes been accorded to it in those services. Still, the old Puritans were right in the theory that instruction is the main thing in the Sabbath assemblies. The dispensation of the Word is the leading office of the church. It is hardly necessary to say that there is room for enlargement here. The scope of the pulpit is steadily extending — the preachers are learning to magnify their office.

There is a broader application of truth to life in the Sunday ministrations: the discovery has been made that the wisdom from above is profitable to direct in the affairs of every day. Ministers are not so much afraid as once they were that in trying to sanctify the shop and the kitchen they will secularize the pulpit. All truth is one; all truth is of God; and the preacher's province includes all truth. The testimony of the rocks he may not refuse to hear; the law that is written in the human soul he must not neglect to study; the solemn voices of history are for instruction. "For my part, then," said Father Hyacinthe, in his speech before the Peace League, "I bring to the peace movement *the Gospel;* not that Gospel dreamed of by sectaries of every age,— as narrow as their own hearts and minds,— but my own Gospel, received by me from the church and from Jesus Christ; a Gospel which claims authority over everything and excludes nothing, which reiterates and fulfills the word of the Master, 'He that is not against us is for us'; and which, instead of rejecting the hand held out to it, marches forward to the van of all just ideas, and all honest souls. . . . You are Christians. I also am a Christian, and a priest, and a monk. But neither in the Christian religion, nor in those glorious rags of the monastic habit, nor in the seclusion of cloister and temple, has it been in my wish or in my power to separate myself from the things of the world. I am not out of my place in discussing social questions in their relations with the Gospel, with morality, and religion. I am in my place, because I am a priest and because I am a citizen; because I have not abdicated for the heavenly country the interests and the love of my earthly country."

Everybody knows that it was the utterance of such words as these that cost the great Carmelite preacher his frock. It was no theological unsoundness, it was rather the heresy of believing that the teachings of the Gospel ought to be as broad in their application as human life itself, that brought him under the ban of his church. But Father Hyacinthe is not alone in this heresy, even in his own church. He represents the tendency, now strongly manifesting itself in all Christendom, to take the Gospel out of the ruts of ecclesiasticism and metaphysics, that it may have free course and be glorified in the regeneration of society.

But it is not only in the pulpit that the church provides instruction. For the public service it employes one teacher; for the children's service—the Sunday-school—it employs ten or twenty or a hundred. Each Sunday-school teacher is a preacher of the Gospel, and obeys the parting command of Christ to his disciples quite as literally as the minister does when he stands in the desk and delivers an elaborate discourse. By the use of this instrumentality the work of the church has been greatly enlarged. The Sunday-school reaches many that the pulpit cannot reach; and the influence which the church exerts upon society is far wider than it could be without the Sunday-school.

The Sunday-school not only provides oral instruction for its scholars, but also furnishes them with a literature of its own. Doubtless many of these books are no better than they ought to be; yet it cannot be doubted that the Sunday-school library supplies to multitudes of children a most valuable fund of enjoyment and instruction.

This is, however, almost the only use which the church makes of the printing-press. A few tracts are scattered, and papers are given to the children; but there is no large employment of literature as a means of instruction. Why should not every church have a large and choice library of miscellaneous books as part of its outfit? Books of reference for Bible students and Sunday-school teachers would of course be found in such a library; but it might contain a careful selection of books of history, science, travel, poetry, and fiction. And if in connection with this library, in the larger towns a reading-room could be opened, where every evening young men and women, whose leisure is more toilsome than their toil, might spend a pleasant hour or two with the books of the library and the current newspapers and periodicals — a most valuable addition would be made to the furniture of the church. The library and reading-room should be in the hands of an association of young men and women, organized in the church, for mutual improvement and for Christian work. In addition to their weekly religious services, meetings devoted to intellectual improvement, with essays, declamations, and debates, mixed with music, tableaux, charades, and other diversions of the sort should be furnished by the young people themselves. If any of the young men have a little knowledge of chemistry or natural philosophy, let them furnish occasionally some interesting experiments in these sciences. A course of lectures by home talent, that shall cost nothing and be worth more than some courses that cost much, may also be arranged by an association of young people.

These are some of the means by which the church may extend its work of instruction. Other lawful means can be devised by which the work of the Christian teacher can be supplemented, and the church can be made a seminary of sound learning as well as true piety.

It must not be forgotten that our churches contain large numbers of persons, young and old, whose opportunities of mental cultivation have been limited, and who are not now able to avail themselves of the advantages of books, periodicals, lectures, and the like. Such persons need, and many of them would highly prize, such privileges as I have suggested. Is there any good reason why the church should not afford them? Doubtless in some communities these methods would be less practicable than in others: of that each church must judge for itself.

I have only spoken of the department of Christian instruction. In the other departments of church work there is room for equal enlargement. There is only space here to say, that while it is possible on the one hand for a church to undertake too much, there is reason to fear, on the other hand, that many of our churches attempt too little; that their work is done after a pattern too small; that there are instrumentalities of usefulness within their reach of which they wholly neglect to avail themselves. Quite likely a church may be too broad, but are not some churches too narrow?

XV

THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

IF one of the forefathers of American Christianity should come back to this earth, he would behold a new aspect of religion strangely unfamiliar to him. The old parish church, whose "three decker" pulpit he was wont to regard with so austere a reverence, he would find converted into a house of prayer and praise, with bright, hearty services,—touching social life, moreover, in all its ministrations, and attracting all classes in the community by the varied character of its parochial work. The first impression would doubtless be a painful one; the beholder, however, would soon discover that the change was no indication of a secularization of religion, but that, on the contrary, it was the proof of increased spiritual life. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said our Lord, "if ye love one another as I have loved you." And this new aspect of Christianity is plainly due to the development of Christ's own spirit in the church. Impelled by that spirit, she is not content to preach the Gospel and stop there. In her love for souls and her resolve to reach the masses, she no longer waits, as in days of yore, for men to come to her, but, like her Divine Master, goes out into the highways and the hedges to compel them to come in; sympathizing with them in their human interests, and striving to bring Christ into their daily lives. The only question that arises is, How far can the church legitimately carry these efforts?

As she thus strives to touch the life of the community at many points, she will, almost of necessity, be brought face to face with many of those burning social and political questions which agitate a nation's life. What part, if any, has she to bear in these? The Gospels themselves furnish a clear and definite answer. The church is to be the teacher of the nation in those things *which pertain to the kingdom of Heaven.* In other words, she has a duty to perform and a part to take in all questions which directly affect the moral character of the people, and only in these.

And now let us apply this principle to some of these issues to which we have referred.

I. THE CHURCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY. The conviction is very strong in America that ecclesiastical organizations should have no connection whatever with political movements, and that such a thing as a political sermon should never be heard in a Christian pulpit; for the whole experience of the past teaches that a theocratic church and a secular state so limit each other that interference on either side is productive only of evil. There is one point, however, where the Christian church and the civil society meet one another, and that is in the individual. The American government derives its authority, not after a theoretical manner, but in actual fact, from the wills of the people; and it is entirely within the province of the church, in her efforts to teach the nation, to exert Christian influence upon that which is thus the highest source of the nation's power and authority,* — the individual will and conscience. Applying our principle, we find that there are two classes of political questions for the people to decide. The first are exclusively political: they belong wholly to the State, and men of the highest moral principle differ in opinion about them; the second are as distinctly moral in character; they form part of the religious progress of the world, and regarding these, men of principle have no difference of opinion. Here, then, the church is to follow the example of her Divine Master in rendering unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. With such issues as protection and free trade, taxation or coinage, the distribution or the centralization of power, she has nothing to do. But in questions like civil-service reform, the payment of public debts, the sacredness of the ballot-box, or issues which directly affect the moral status of society, she should utter her voice with no uncertain sound, for in dealing with these it is the *conscience* of the people which needs to be educated and stimulated,— especially in local political issues, in which corruption is so rife,— and no persons in the whole community are so fitted to do this work as the clergy and the Christian laity of the church, who are accustomed by their peculiar training to be always referring human actions to the highest standards of right and wrong.

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* Harris, "The Relation of Christianity to Civil Society," p. 129.

II. Class Conflicts and Socialism. While it is true that the church cannot claim any monopoly of wisdom regarding those modern social problems which many men of many minds are studying so closely, it is also true that the leaders of the Christian church, who, as a general thing, have no personal interests at stake, whose sympathies are equally divided between employers and employed, and, above all, whose single aim is to elevate the moral tone of the community, can wield a very powerful influence as peacemakers in averting those class conflicts which seem to be impending no less in America than in Europe. To do this, however, they must clearly comprehend the nature of the struggle, studying the utterances of socialists on the one side and of economists on the other. The reading and comparison, for example, of two such remarkable books as "Progress and Poverty," by Henry George, and "The Distribution of Products," by Edward Atkinson, is in itself an education.

And if it be true that neither side is wholly right or altogether in the wrong,—if only a clearer apprehension of the rights of all classes in the community can eventually bring about a solution of the present difficulties between labor and capital,—it is the bounden duty of the members of the church in public and in private to develop the moral sense of the people by fearlessly, and with ceaseless iteration, preaching the rule of right; referring to its simple standard, on the one hand, all such business transactions as stock gambling, "pools," "corners in the market," and that kind of extravagance which by its uselessness embitters the masses, and on the other, the claims of ignorant demagogues, the tyranny of the boycott, or the violence of brute forces.

The world may sneer at this appeal to the conscience, yet, in the end, it is always found to be the strongest of all appeals, if it is persistently made.

But the influence of the church will be still more potent if she brings these widely separated classes together; for it is mutual ignorance which begets mutual distrust, and when the stream of sympathy begins to flow from heart to heart, other things will right themselves. And here what is impossible for other organizations is possible for every parish church — especially if, as a free church, she opens her doors to all. Beneath her roof, rich and poor, capitalist and workman, meet with equal rights as children of a common Father. In her varied forms of parochial work — reaching from the highest to the lowest classes in the community — each has his peculiar sphere, in which none can work for God as well as he, and thus all become mutually interdependent upon one another.

III. Intemperance. This is undoubtedly the greatest social evil which assails our prosperity. Yet there is by no means unanimity of opinion regarding the best method of cure, and while this difference exists among good men, the church has no right to go beyond the plain letter of the Gospel itself in espousing exclusively the cause of either prohibitionists or total abstainers, or those whose watch-word is "Let your moderation be known to all men."* Rather is it her duty to adopt a wider policy, and band all these classes together against the common enemy of drunkenness.

The laws of this country regarding intemperance are far in advance of the moral standard of the people, and hence are seldom enforced, nor has any individual member of the community the power to right the wrong. Yet the diffused temperance sentiment that exists among us would, if concentrated, become an enormous power for good. It is within the legitimate sphere of a parish church to focalize this general sentiment by taking the lead in the formation of law and order leagues for the enforcement of the statutes; and in all such efforts she will have the sympathies of the community with her. So, also, in the establishment of coffee-houses and working-men's clubs, as a counteractive influence against the saloons, is a very useful line of action open to her.* Again, in hundreds of our smaller villages, intemperance and immorality are largely caused by the lack of amusement, and because there is no place of resort on the long winter evenings for farm lads and factory hands, no occasion on which young people of both sexes can meet for recreation. In such cases, it is unquestionably the duty of the church to supply the lack by brightening the lives of the people with innocent pleasure. This she can easily do by her Christmas festivities and other gatherings. The writer, a few years ago, visited a parish church in the east of London which had transformed one of the worst sections of the city into an orderly neighborhood. He found there weekly penny readings and concerts attended by the poorest; a night school; a gymnasium filled with boys; a band of music, composed exclusively of parishioners, playing in the streets; and even a young people's sociable club, some members of which were dancing a quadrille when the rector with his visitors entered the room. No one, however, was allowed to join these organizations unless he or she bore an irreproachable moral character. We do not say that the peculiar plans followed here should be adopted elsewhere. Each parish, like each individual, has a character of its own, and what is possible or expedient in one place may not be so in another; but the wisdom of such efforts is manifest. When, a few years ago, the rector of that parish died, it is said that ten thousand of the London poor accompanied the funeral procession.

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* A village church may, however, justly espouse the cause of prohibition if there is a practical unanimity of sentiment among the inhabitants upon this subject.

IV. Pauperism. Many years ago, the Reverend William Law, the author of the "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," in his desire to obey literally the Gospel call to a life of self-sacrifice, agreed with two rich friends to live together and give all they could spare to the poor. They soon attracted a crowd of idle and lying mendicants about them, and the people were at last driven to present a memorial to the magistrates requesting them to prevent Mr. Law from demoralizing their parish. It is useless, perhaps, in these days to speak of the folly of such indiscriminate almsgiving, for it is generally acknowledged now that this is only another way of pauperizing the poor. But let us beware of going to the opposite extreme. If, while we withhold, we give nothing in the place of our alms, we are in danger of freezing up the fount of Christian sympathy in our hearts. The pauper is morally, intellectually, and oftentimes physically the weakest member of the community. He needs not alms, but the personal influence of some friend to lift him up and show him how to live; and the church should send some Christian man or woman with a cool head and warm heart to watch like a guardian angel over that man and his suffering family until they are rescued. Many problems and trying discouragements will arise in following this plan, but if such visitors meet together in weekly conference and bring their united wisdom to bear upon the various cases, many of the families thus watched over will eventually become self-supporting. Oftentimes a poor man is kept down because, being obliged to pay the highest retail prices at the corner grocery for the necessities of life, he cannot get ahead of his daily expenditures. Here the church may come to his aid by keeping a primitive coöperative store in the shape of a barrel of flour, a barrel of sugar, a bag of coffee, and a box of tea, stored in a closet, and selling these provisions at cost, on condition that the purchaser will pay the usual retail price and leave the surplus money to his credit in the parish savings fund for a specified time. Many have been taught in these ways habits of thrift, and the writer knows of one woman, utterly shiftless at first, who thus in one year saved twenty-one dollars.

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* Great caution, however, is here needed, for practical reasons. The whole experience of the past teaches that for a coffee-house to be a success, it must be conducted on the soundest business principles, and be made a self-supporting institution.

V. EDUCATION. Great as is the value of the common-school system, it has this one inherent weakness: while it cultivates the intellect, it ignores moral character, and we are reaping the results of this false philosophy of life in a generation of educated but characterless men, who habitually place cleverness before virtue, and who know the right but do the wrong. A better system of education might be provided were our churches to organize parish schools in connection with their other work; but the effort to do this has not, as a rule, been successful, and it is useless in the present state of public sentiment to attempt to compete with the common-school system. The evils of that system are fast becoming recognized, and are slowly working their own cure both in Germany and America; and until a better day dawns, the wiser course for the church to pursue is to use all her influence in promoting the choice of public-school teachers who shall be high-principled Christian men.

VI. THE PREVALENCE OF DIVORCE. Whatever the civil laws of the various States may be, here is a matter in which all Christian people should be guided solely by the law of Christ. The present facility for divorce is a blot upon our American society which threatens the destruction of family life amongst us. And this is fatal, for the family is the foundation upon which all civilization is built.

The members of the Christian church should therefore not only endeavor persistently to bring about a unification of our marriage laws in the various States, and a closer correspondence of their enactments with the law of Christ, but also create so strong a public opinion among all right-minded persons that no Christian minister of any denomination will dare to marry or re-marry men and women save as the law of Christ permits.

In these and other ways, the church has a great and important place to fill in the community. Viewed from a Christian standpoint, the object and end of human history and of all modern civilization, with its arts, its sciences, and its manifold activities, is the building up of character; and not until the church of Christ rises to the full sense of her responsibility as the teacher of the nation, in fact as well as in theory, will she make full proof of her ministry.

There stands her charter and her divine commission in its wonderful completeness and comprehensiveness, as given by her risen Lord: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

XVI

LATENT POWER IN THE CHURCHES

MANY church-members seem to have forgotten the meaning of the church and its mission. The church is not an ark in which the elect few may take refuge and float placidly along over the perishing members of a lost race. It is not a ferry-boat intended to transfer idle passengers to the heavenly shore. It is not a sort of eternal life insurance company, all obligations to which are discharged when the annual dues have been paid. It is not a coterie, composed of a social set to which members of another social stratum are not admitted, or are at least unwelcome. It is not a club organized to furnish agreeable Sunday entertainments. It is not simply a school where we are to sit forever at the feet of some instructor and learn. Nor is the church for worship only. Being present at every service in the year, accepting our share of financial responsibility, contributing generously to every benevolence of the church and appropriately participating in the services—even this, much as it is, is not all. If every member of every church did all this, and only this, the church would fall far short of accomplishing its mission.

The church exists for work as well as for worship. What do we suppose was Christ's conception of his church? What was his object in its organization? The church was to be his body, the instrument of his will, the medium through which his spirit and life should be manifested to the world. It is the business of the body to execute the purpose of the head. Christ must have organized the church, his body, to carry forward the work which brought him into the world. And Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That was his business. And the business of the church is identical with the business of its founder. The church exists to save sinners, in the broadest and fullest sense of the word *save;* and that church which does not make the saving of sinners the object of its preaching and hearing, its praying and giving and meeting, is not minding its business, is unfaithful to its commission, and belies its Master.

From the fact that so many Christians forget that Christ calls his disciples for the express purpose of discipling the nations, that the great object of organizing the church in the world was work, and that some particular part of it has been apportioned to every servant of Christ, it has come to pass that only a very small portion of the power of the church is put forth. My theme is, "The Latent Power of the Churches." I shall treat it under three heads.

First. The latent power in numbers.

Second. The latent financial power of the churches.

Third. The latent power of work.

First. When it is said that the business of the church is identical with the business of its founder, by "the church" is meant not its minister, not the church within the church,—the faithful few, who give the money and do the work and constitute the active power of the body,—but every member of the church. Every member of the body is intended to serve. When any member refuses to perform its proper function, there is soreness, disease, paralysis. Many members of Christ's body have been struck with the paralysis of worldliness. They do nothing but hang helpless, and are carried about by the other members. The hands or feet are often paralyzed so that Christ's will is very inadequately executed in the world. The tongue is often paralyzed so that Christ very imperfectly utters himself among men. These diseased, and withered, and useless members of the body of Christ not only do not serve, but hinder those that do. If they cannot be restored to health and service, their amputation would render the body more effective.

Not a few church-members seem to be under the impression that they hire the minister to do their Christian work for them and look after their spiritual concerns, just as they employ a lawyer to look after their legal interests. An elder in a Southern church, when called on by his pastor to lead in prayer, declined, saying, "That's what we hire you for." As well might a pupil in a gymnasium think he employed his teacher to take exercise for him; as well might a company of soldiers imagine that it is the duty of their captain to go through the drill in their stead, and fight their battles, while they look on and applaud or criticize. If your exercise is taken by some one else, *your* exercise is not taken at all. Duty can't be done by another.

To test the practice of our church-members in this particular, a few questions were lately addressed to the pastors of churches, large and small, in city and country, in all parts of Ohio, with the request that answers be returned after the first *pleasant* Sabbath. It is true that in some quarters country roads are bad in April; but, on the other hand, the glow of revival fervor lingers yet in many churches, which of course increases congregations. Moreover, many Sabbaths during the year are stormy. We may safely infer, therefore, that our statistics gathered on a pleasant day represent an attendance rather above than below the average. Replies were received from thirty churches. A larger proportion of pastors in the city responded than of pastors in the country, and this fact improves the showing of the churches; for I find, on examination, that the percentage of resident membership attending church and prayer-meeting in the city is decidedly larger than in the country. Let us bear in mind, then, that the average of these thirty churches is above that of the State; and we should not forget that our facts are presented in a year of exceptional spiritual life.

Of these thirty churches the average resident membership is one hundred and sixty-nine. Only ninety-five of these members are found in church Sabbath morning, and only thirty-eight of them are in their places at the weekly prayer-meeting. That is, only fifty-six per cent. of the resident membership attend worship on a pleasant Sabbath morning, and only twenty-two per cent. are at the weekly meeting of prayer. This means that of thirty thousand members, in round numbers, about fifteen thousand are not found at church Sabbath morning. Some of these are present in the evening, some are sick and some are attending the sick, while others are temporarily absent from home. But is it not evident that a majority of these absentees are neglecting duty? And is there not a great loss of that power which resides in numbers? Members of the church who can attend its services, and do not, have very little spiritual life and no spiritual power, do little or nothing to help the kingdom, and much to hinder it.

The average seating capacity of these thirty churches is three hundred and ninety-two, and the average morning congregation is one hundred and eighty-eight; that is, only forty-eight per cent. of the seats are occupied. Our church buildings are less than half filled by our morning congregations. It would cost no more to open the average church for a congregation of three hundred and ninety-two than for one of one hundred and eighty-eight, and there would be more than twice as much good done — more than twice as many souls fed, more than twice as many souls saved with the same expenditure of time and money. It costs no more effort to prepare a sermon for many than for few, and every minister knows that it is much easier to preach to a large congregation than to a small one. There is an enthusiasm, an inspiration in numbers which multiplies the preacher's power so that often the meager loaves and fishes which would not suffice for a dozen hungry disciples are made to feed the multitude with superabundance.

Does not the fact that only one is fed and quickened in our churches where two might be show a great and lamentable loss of opportunity and power? A very remarkable preacher may draw a full house, even though his members do not lift a finger. But the *average* preacher cannot be a very remarkable preacher; and most of the world's work, in every walk of life, is done by average people. Unless the average preacher and the average church can succeed under average conditions, Christianity can never conquer the world. Now the average preacher cannot fill the pews without the coöperation of his church, and the *exceptional* preacher who is able to do it is very exceptional. In this matter a responsibility rests on the church-membership which is not felt. I venture to say that not one in ten of our members, aside from occupying his own seat, feels the slightest responsibility for the size of the congregations. And this accounts for the fact that less than one-half of our sittings are occupied.

The evening services of a certain church were poorly attended; people thought they could not come out twice a Sunday. The council talked it over and pledged one another that they would never willingly absent themselves from the evening service, and that they would urge every one they saw to plan for a second attendance. The parents talked it over. They found their children were not in the habit of spending the evening religiously or profitably, and they determined to set them an example of an earnest devotion to spiritual concerns. The young men talked it over. They concluded that it was their duty to attend services, and to bring at least one young man apiece with them. The young ladies talked it over. They thought that if they could go to a concert or party at night, it would not do them any harm to attend church after sunset. They decided that they would go regularly and take each a young woman with her. The minister was astonished. He did not know what to make of it. The attendance was increasing every week. Strangers, seeing the direction of the crowd, followed. It became the most popular church in the city.

Simply through the efforts of a dozen young men, I have seen a congregation increased fivefold in five Sabbath evenings. I do not believe there is a meeting-house in the State of Ohio large enough to hold the numbers that would gather to it in one month's time if the latent power in the churches were all put forth.

We have seen that in the case of the thirty churches before referred to only twenty-two per cent. of the resident membership was in attendance upon the weekly prayer-meeting. If all the churches of the association were taken, I am confident the average attendance would not be above twenty per cent.; that is, eighty per cent. may be relied on to be absent. In some cases their health does not permit their getting out in the evening. There are others who do not command their own time, and who, no matter how much they desire to do so, are unable to attend. But making due allowance for these, surely more than one in five of the resident membership could be, and hence should be, present at a meeting which all need, and which is supposed to interest all. It was when all the disciples were with one accord in one place that the Pentecostal blessing came. Most church covenants require candidates for admission to pledge in some form their coöperation in sustaining the regular meetings of the church. But multitudes of men who would not think of breaking a business engagement, violate their covenant with God and the church habitually and with a comfortable conscience.

It is a sad comment on the spiritual life of our churches that out of thirty thousand members only six thousand should be present at the prayer-meeting on a given week, and twenty-four thousand absent. Is there no waste of that power which resides in numbers? If there were four times as many present, the service would do good to four times as many, and vastly more than four times as much good would be done, because the meeting would be vastly better. If a given number of active Christians do a certain amount of good, manifestly twice as many of the same sort would accomplish twice as much. But this is not all. The Word says that "one shall chase a thousand and two put" not two thousand but "ten thousand to flight." There is a cumulative power in numbers greater than the numerical increase. Two hundred Christians ought to be able to accomplish far more than twice as much as one hundred, and will, if they properly coöperate.

If a half of our church membership does nothing, far more than one-half of the possible power is lost. If four out of five do nothing, possibly ninety-nine one-hundredths of the power is wasted. The secret of the fact that possible power increases more rapidly than numbers lies in organization, the value of which in Christian work the churches and denominations are barely beginning to learn. The difference between civilized and savage warfare is not that civilized men are braver or physically stronger than savages. Regularly drilled soldiers support each other. Organization, coöperation, and drill make them tenfold more effective. There is very little in our churches which corresponds to the fighting of companies or regiments. The army of the Lord is for the most part engaged in a kind of bushwhacking. Single soldiers or squads fire here and there, but there is very little intelligent and effective coöperation. Organization is as necessary in spiritual warfare as in carnal; is as valuable in Christian work as in business enterprise.

Is not the teaching of the Word that the church is the body of Christ something more than a hint that it should be thoroughly organized? A church is something more than an aggregation of Christian men and women who agree together to support the ordinances of the Gospel. A hundred hands do not together make an organized body. The effectiveness of this wondrous human frame as an instrument is due to the fact that it has many members of different offices which coöperate, and thus increase the effectiveness of one another many fold. Your eyes make your one pair of hands worth more than a dozen pairs would be without eyes. When each member of the body of Christ has learned to serve and in organization has found its true place of service so that each member multiplies the effectiveness of all the others, then will the churches have utilized the latent power which resides in numbers.

Second. There is an important sense in which the Gospel is not free and ought not to be. Ever since it was ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live by it, the Gospel has cost something. Those who accept it owe it to others, and its promulgation is not without money or without price. Every Christian, without exception, ought to contribute to the support of Gospel ordinances according to ability. If we had in our membership an aged and decrepit member who was wholly dependent on the church for support, in bearing to her the pledge of our Christian love and care I would say to her: "It is your privilege to contribute a part of this to the support of the Gospel." And though she could cast into the treasury but two mites,— one for the current expenses and the other for the benevolences of the church,— she would have enough to win the approval of Him who commended the widow of old.

The support of the church is not all. Every member of the church needs the blessing which attends giving, needs to feel that interest in the church which can spring only from sacrifice in its behalf. The church should be on the minds, the hearts, the hands of as many as possible. It is an unhealthy condition of things when the church rests on a few members, however willing or able they may be: a death or two, a few removals, and there is collapse.

And there is not a member of any church who is unable to contribute statedly to the support of his church, if only a cent a week, a cent a month, a cent a year — something. A member of the Mahratta Mission, India, told me a few months ago that the average income of a family of six in a church of which he has charge is thirty-six dollars a year. That is, for father, mother, and four children,— not each one, but all together,— there are three dollars a month, which is less than two cents a day for each. Often the mother must gather a handful of sticks or grass and next morning take it to market and find a purchaser before she can provide the first meal for herself and family. Frequently when a man is asked what he had for breakfast, he replies: "Oh, for breakfast, I tied another knot in my girdle." Yet in the annual report of this church it was stated that there was not one family that was too poor to give. All had contributed something to the support of the church. If those whose burden of poverty is so crushing remember thus faithfully the command to bear one another's burdens,— these children of darkness, nursed in the lap of heathenism,— what may be expected of us, the children of light and of privilege?

To the question, sent out to representative churches, "How many members of your church are regular subscribers to its current expenses?" twenty-four made answer. Of one church, having one hundred and twenty-six resident members, one hundred and twenty are regular contributors. Another reports thirty-five out of thirty-nine. One church of forty members reports all as givers. But of the entire number only forty-one per cent. of the resident members are regular contributors.

This accounts for the fact that with the majority of churches there is more or less of a struggle every year to meet the current expenses. And this struggle has a very important bearing on the great question of the hour — how to reach the masses with the Gospel. Unregenerate wealth does not like simple, direct Gospel preaching; those to whom life is a hard struggle,— the poor, the outcast, the downcast,— do. Generally speaking, preaching that will reach and hold the one class will not reach and hold the other. In the cities, our Protestant churches ordinarily choose between the two classes. And I believe that in many instances it is the financial burden which leads churches, perhaps unconsciously, yet really, to adapt the sermon, the music, the entire service and surroundings to the tastes of the "man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel," rather than to the wants of the "poor man in vile raiment."

Another point in connection with the latent money power of the churches: Christian people are as yet only beginning to see that the consecration of themselves to God involves the consecration of their possessions,—not a part, but the whole. They are only beginning to see that they have no property, and, from the nature of the case, can have none; that their possessions are simply a trust to be administered by them as will best glorify God. There is power in the hands of Christian men to reach all mankind with the Gospel; and the Gospel would have been preached to every creature long ago, if the latent power of the church which resides in money had been active power.

In 1880, one-fifth of the wealth of the United States, or $8,728,400,000, was in the hands of church-members, and this takes no account of the immense capital in brains and hands. Of this vast wealth only one-sixteenth part of one per cent., or, more exactly, one dollar out of $1586, is given in a year for missions, home and foreign. The 10,000,000 members of evangelical churches in the United States give to these objects about $5,000,000 a year, *i. e.*, an average of fifty cents apiece. If they spent every cent of wages, salary, and other income on themselves and gave to missions only one cent on the dollar of their real and personal property, their contribution would be $87,000,000 instead of $5,000,000. Taking the average for the ten years from 1870 to 1880, the annual increase of wealth in the hands of American church-members was $391,740,000, and this, remember, was over and above all expense of living and benevolences; that is, the average increase of wealth in the hands of professed Christians was seventy-one times greater than their offering to missions, home and foreign. Of course there are those who give largely, nobly, but this only proves that great numbers give nothing at all.

Third. In our discussion of the latent power in numbers, we have seen how greatly the effectiveness of the churches would be increased if the many were as faithful as the few. But how many of the few have done with their might the saving work their hands found to do? What if all did their utmost? What if all hungered and thirsted to save men?

Christ not only demands the service of every member, but he demands of each the entire power of service,—all of his time, all of his faculties, all of his possessions. There are many who would concede to religion a place in their lives; they are willing to pay it tribute. They say, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's," the Cæsar of their lives being self. But God does not accept a portion of our lives, a part of ourselves. Religion is not something incidental. It is not here and there a little island of goodness and blessedness in the great sea of worldly experiences. It is rather the salt which penetrates every drop of the ocean, is in every wave and ripple and fleck of foam; sweeping along with the great gulf stream, running with every tide, found in every bay and sound and inlet and arm of the sea, filling the length and breadth and height and depth of the whole, and cleansing, sweetening, saving it all. From the ocean's fullness you cannot dip a single cup of water which is not permeated with its salt. And so there ought to be no hour or moment of the Christian's life, no great wave of purpose, or ripple of mirth, no deep or shallow experiences of life, no undiscovered inlet of the character, which the salt of a Christian aim and motive does not penetrate, an ever-present and potent influence.

We talk of religious and secular duties. The distinction is misleading. All duties are religious. Every duty is something due to God, and unless done with reference to him, it is not rightly done. "Whatsoever ye do, do *all* to the glory of God." Every follower of Christ has the same business in life as his master. Christ inspired his disciples with his own spirit and sent them out to disciple the nations. They did not go, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, to fill their lives with gain or pleasure, or worldly power, making only now and then some mention of the new kingdom and the great salvation. Their one great business was to save men, and all else was made tributary to that. Paul had his trade and worked at it, but it did not fill his heart and head and life. He did not strain every nerve to see how many tents he could make and beat that rival shop over the way. When he said, "One thing I do," the business he referred to was not tent-making.

Whatever our *occupation*, whether merchant or mechanic, physician or farmer, we have but one *business* in the world, that which was Paul's, that which was Christ's — the business of saving men. And yet there are thousands who have been members of our churches for twenty, forty, fifty years, who in all that time, so far as they know, have never won a soul to Christ. The Master talked of thirty, sixty, one hundred fold, and that every year. Is it not very moderate to say that if our churches put forth their full power, they would at least double their membership yearly? Permit in this connection the familiar supposition, What if every Christian won a single convert from the world every year? The Methodist leaven in the whole world would suffice to leaven the lump of mankind in a little more than eight years; the Baptist leaven in the whole world would do it in less than nine years; the Presbyterian in the whole world, in a little over nine years; the Congregational leaven in the United States alone, in less than twelve years. Does not this simple calculation plainly show that most of the working power in the church of Christ is as yet latent? Does any one suppose that one-tenth part of that power is brought into active exercise? Suppose business and professional men put only one-tenth of themselves into their work, how much would they accomplish? Suppose clerks and operatives put only one-tenth of their energy and strength into their service, would their employers be satisfied with their work? And can we suppose that God is satisfied with the way in which the churches are doing his work? We have too low a standard of church effectiveness, we are too easily satisfied.

In this day there is scarcely a limit to the possible usefulness of a church that is in dead earnest to save men: especially true is this in our wicked cities. When Dr. Guthrie looked down on one of the most squalid, abandoned, and wicked quarters of Edinburgh, he exclaimed, "A beautiful field!" There are many "beautiful fields" in all our cities. But wicked as are our cities to-day, they are virtuous and Puritanic compared with Ephesus and Antioch, Athens, Corinth and Rome, when the Master sent forth the little handful of followers to battle with their sin, and the Galilean conquered. If the enemies of truth and righteousness were tenfold more numerous than they are, they that be with us would be more than they that be with them. We have access to the right arm of Almighty Power. All power in heaven and earth has been given to the Lord Christ. But how can we lay hold of that power unless we use that already given, unless we bring into active use the latent power of the churches?

Some one has said, "What is needed is not more men but more man." Even so, what we need is not so much more Christians as more Christian. We need a higher idea of what it is to bear the name of Christ. The name does not mean simply that we were born in a Christian land, or that we belong to an ancient and very respectable organization called the church. It does not mean simply that God claims one day in seven of our time, or that we are expected to devote a certain proportion of our income to our fellow-men, or that we are to unite in hiring a man called the minister to do good in the world in our stead. It does not mean that by once confessing Christ we laid him under obligations to see that we are everlastingly saved. The name Christian means that you are Christ's man, body and soul, powers and possessions, seven days in the week, and every week in your life. Said Elizabeth Fry, "I believe I have never awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or night, without my first waking thought being how I might serve the Lord." Such consecration wields a mighty power.

"Give me," exclaimed Wesley, "one hundred men who fear nothing but God, hate nothing but sin, and are determined to know nothing among men but Christ and him crucified, and I will set the world on fire." If every Christian were a torch of God, burning with the fire of a zeal kindled by Christ's love, we might exclaim, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

XVII

COÖPERATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES

COÖPERATION on Christian principles instead of competition on business principles is one of the most urgent needs of the churches to-day.

The impression that our duty to the non-church-going public is done when the church door is unlocked, the bell rung, and the gas lighted, is giving place to the conviction that the church must "go" and disciple men. If, however, the church goes from house to house with an invitation to its services and with no reference to other churches, the effect of the invitation is largely lost, because it is thought to be selfish. "Heavy expenses; they want me to contribute and hence invite me to go." The impression is given that the people are sought for the sake of the church. In many minds the church has become an end instead of a means. "What can we do to save the church?" instead of "What can the church do to save men?" The competition of churches, which is so mournfully common, indeed almost universal, is sufficient evidence to the world that the churches are selfish; that they seek attendants in exactly the same spirit that a business house seeks customers. And, of course, men who care nothing for the church cannot be induced to attend for the sake of the church. When we really convince men that we seek not theirs but them, and that we seek them for their own sakes, not ours, we shall have far more influence with them. When the invitation is given in the name of all the churches, it is manifest that they are coöperating instead of competing, and the invitation which is seen to be unselfish is much more effective. Such oneness in spirit and effort has an influence which thrice the effort without coöperation cannot have; not simply because organization always economizes force, but because such oneness is the convincing evidence of the divine origin and character of the Christian religion, which the world lacks. Christ prayed that his followers might be one *that the world might know that the Father sent him.*

The spirit of oneness which exists should not be satisfied with mere professions of fellowship, but should seek practical demonstration in harmonious coöperation. If each church were properly organized and at work, the necessity of coöperation between churches would be felt. Without it there would be constant friction. That friction is slightly felt, only because the churches are doing so little aggressive work. There is no friction in a grave-yard. As soon as the churches accept their full duty and attempt to carry the Gospel to every house, the necessity of coöperation will be manifest.

How shall the churches coöperate in their efforts to reach the entire community? The first thing to be aimed at is an accurate knowledge of facts. How many people are there in the town or township not effectively reached by the churches? How many never attend church? How many attend only occasionally? What is the church preference of non-attendants? How many children are there not in Sabbath-school? How many Catholics? How many needy families? When this information has been gained, it should be persistently and systematically followed up.

The first step toward securing these data for church work is to get pastors and a few earnest, influential laymen together to talk and plan and pray over the condition of the community. Probably many such meetings will be necessary before the coöperative work is inaugurated. Interest and enthusiasm will thus be kindled, without which nothing can be done. If pastors are not interested, their churches will not be.

Let there be appointed from every church efficient laymen — perhaps one for every hundred members; a larger proportion in small towns with few and feeble churches — who shall direct the work. Divide the community into as many districts as there are directors, in such manner as to equalize the work. Let each director select with great care ten members from his own church, and divide his field among them, assigning a certain number of families to each visitor. After the first canvass the work can be more equally divided.

Let all the visitors come together and receive proper instructions and be provided with uniform blanks. It will generally be found that about ten families fall to the care of each visitor. The labor will not be so great but that *each visitor can visit her entire charge every month.* She reports to her director, and the several directors tabulate their facts at regular meetings. This board of directors serves as a sort of clearing-house.

The canvass has revealed some who are members of churches elsewhere, who on moving into the place neglected Christian obligations. Others who attend church rarely or not at all have expressed a preference for some church. Each pastor is informed of his own, and charged with the duty of looking them up. Non-church-goers, who would express no preference, have been cordially invited, in the name of all the churches, to attend the nearest place of worship. If the first invitation is declined, the twentieth may be accepted.

The visitors also have a monthly meeting in which the relation of experiences is full of interest and profit. If this work is done, not in a perfunctory manner, but in an evangelistic spirit with much prayer, it affords an invaluable training to the visitors. They become skilled workers; and ten such persons for every hundred in the church give new life to the prayer-meeting and raise the spiritual tone of the whole membership.

It will be said that such an undertaking is very formidable. True: duty is often formidable, but always practicable. It will be objected that ladies of culture cannot be persuaded to undertake such visitations. They can be, if they are Christians.

"In the Pilgrim Church, in Cambridgeport, Mass., there was opposition when it was proposed to organize house-to-house visitation. With great reluctance on the part of many it was secured that a trial district of arbitrary boundaries should be worked for three months as an experiment. But so successful was the trial that the entire region of the city in which the church was located was divided into districts, and has been carefully worked for over twelve years without interruption and with excellent results in every direction,—in the discipline of a body of workers of exceptional efficiency and numbers; in the improvement of the church attendance of two entire wards of the city; in the bringing of hundreds of children under religious training; in the timely and thorough distribution of relief; in the promotion of temperance; in conversions and powerful religious awakenings." *

Similar results followed the inauguration of the above system of coöperation in Mansfield, Ohio, a few years ago. Within the first twelve months there were three hundred and eighty-five added to the membership of the eight churches which joined in the movement.

This system has been eminently successful with a population as small as nine thousand and with one as large as twenty-six thousand. There seems to be no reason why it should not prove equally applicable to a village, and, with some modifications, to a large city. If the churches of a large city are pretty evenly distributed over it, treat every ward or two wards as a separate city. That is, let there be a complete organization of the churches for coöperative work within each ward.

If the churches have followed the well-to-do people to the suburbs or up town, leaving a large region neglected, the following plan of coöperation is suggested: Let an interdenominational committee divide into districts the neglected part of the city. Let these districts be assigned to uptown churches to evangelize — the size of the district depending on the strength of the church. If one district is not large enough to require the organization of a church, let two contiguous districts be assigned to two churches of the same denomination, and let them together plant a church of their own order. If there is a union city missionary society, let it share in the work just as if it were a church. Give it all it can do, and do well, and assign the remainder to the churches. Thus every street, every court, every house will be under pastoral care.

Each church will naturally begin the evangelization of the district assigned to it by a canvass for facts. A knowledge of the facts (if anything can do it) will arouse the church to furnish the necessary means and workers. Every church will give more to a work which is definite and exclusively its own than to any other.

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* From address of Rev. George R. Leavitt, D. D., at Interdenominational Congress in Cincinnati, December, 1885.

When the church has been planted in the assigned district, it might be surrounded with an indefinite number of missions, open every night, on the plan of the McAll missions in France, which are very inexpensive and effective. These missions would prove constant feeders to the church. Thus with a method of work which is coöperative instead of competitive, the whole city might be covered with evangelizing agencies.

First. Coöperation economizes effort; it prevents overlapping; it covers neglected fields. Without it there can be no certainty that the Gospel is carried to every creature.

Second. Coöperation stimulates effort. Intelligent coöperation involves system and systematic effort to reach the entire community; calls into action all available force, thus arousing churches otherwise dormant.

Third. Coöperation stops competition, churches cease hindering one another and begin helping each other. This would remove one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the way of Christian progress. The efforts of different churches would no longer partially neutralize each other, but by supplementing each other render effects cumulative. One shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight.

Fourth. One of the most important results of coöperation is mutual acquaintance, which is fruitful of Christian confidence and fellowship. If the organic unity of the churches ever comes, it will come not through discussing together, which is divisive, but through working together.

Fifth. Coöperation localizes responsibility: every one would say that if Christians are the light of the world, then they are responsible for enlightening the world; certainly the Christians of this country are responsible for its evangelization; but this responsibility which is acknowledged by all is accepted by few, because it is general; if it could be localized it would be felt. One of the great advantages of coöperation is that it fixes responsibility; when a community has been districted and a portion within clearly defined limits is assigned to each church, a pastor can say to his people: "Here are so many hundred or thousand souls assigned to us. If we do not give them the Gospel, no one will."

If that church is properly organized, and the field assigned to it is divided between its members, the responsibility is fixed and hence felt, and the conscience is aroused. Thus the reaching of the masses ceases to be everybody's business and becomes somebody's business, with a presumption that it will be done.

VIII

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

I

THE CHURCH AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

THE school on Sunday, by which little children of the neglected English populations were, one hundred years ago, taught lessons in spelling, reading, and religious truth, has come to be a great and powerful factor in our social and Christian life.

A measure of this success must be attributed to other ideas than those embraced by Robert Raikes and his co-workers. The school on Sunday in America, in this good year of our Lord 1887, is a very different institution from that opened and sustained by the Gloucester printer in 1780. It is more comprehensive, and contains elements not dreamed of in the scheme of Mr. Raikes. It retains the name and also the domestic missionary feature of the Gloucester movement, but this feature is only a small part of the modern American Sunday-school. The tiny stream of laic, out-of-church, humanitarian effort that trickled from the humble fountain in Gloucester soon joined the swollen and rushing flood that had broken loose from fountains of Christian and churchly philanthropy in Oxford, nearly half a century before Raikes and his assistants began their work. The later effort was in behalf of neglected children. The Oxford brotherhood did also teach children in street and private dwelling, but they labored as well in behalf of men and women in hospitals, prisons, and wretched homes; in behalf of tempted and doubting and godless young men in Oxford University; in behalf of all classes and all ages everywhere; and the key-note of all their work was, Bible study and holy living. The Oxford idea was broader, more comprehensive, more radical, as it was earlier by nearly fifty years than the Gloucester idea. Both, however, developed a form of social, hand-to-hand, church effort, to the end that children, and youth, and adults of all grades of society might know the truth and live for God; and thus both Oxford and Gloucester unite in the best Sunday-school thought of the present day. Those who study the institution have discovered earlier and similar endeavors in the same direction, and it is not difficult to trace all the essentials of the best modern Sunday-school work to apostolic and pre-Christian times.

Whatever relations the Sunday-school may have sustained to the church in the days of Charles Borromeo in Italy, of Robert Raikes in England, of Francis Asbury or Isabella Graham in America, it is a most gratifying fact that to-day it is, especially in America, duly recognized as, in some very significant sense, a part of the church. It is held in buildings provided by the church; sustained by funds collected, in one way or another, from the supporters of the church; organized and officered under the supervision and subject to at least the veto of the church; taught by members of the church; preached about, prayed for, and in many cases reviewed and catechised by the pastor of the church; supplying from its ranks a large proportion of "the new converts," ministers, and missionaries of the church; building up by its patronage immense publishing interests, and contributing to the large "benevolences" which are controlled and directed by the church.

In many of the highest ecclesiastical councils of the several denominations official action has been taken, recognizing the Sunday-school as an integrant part of the church organization, subject to ecclesiastical authority.

And why should it not be so? What work has the church to do which can be so well done without the coöperation of the Sunday-school? Must the church preach the Word? How can she do it more effectively than by raising up a congregation trained from early childhood in the history, the biographies, the ethical principles, and the sublime doctrines of the Holy Scriptures? How can she better multiply the publishers of the Gospel than by putting its precious truths into the hearts and on the tongues of laymen, and of women who will go with these truths every Sabbath to little circles of susceptible and receptive souls? How will she more successfully send the preached word to the regions beyond, the Macedonias of this day, than by raising up from the children of the church missionary givers and missionary "goers," who, having been trained to the habit of giving pennies and prayers to the cause of Christ in foreign fields, will easily go one step further, and give themselves?

Must the church edify believers? How can she do it more thoroughly than by turning all believers into "disciples," and making it necessary for the "disciples to become teachers"? What did St. Paul mean by his counsel to the Colossians (iii. 16)—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another" *—if he did not expect the church to study the word in the mutual way of conversation and class-instruction so admirably provided for in the modern Sunday-school Bible-class?

Must the church promote practical philanthropy, Christian neighborship and sympathy? How can she devise more wise and efficient methods than are supplied in the relations between all classes of church-members secured by the Sunday-school? Here rich and poor meet together to study the Word of God. Here children are brought into sacred and tender relations with teachers, who are likely to feel an interest in all that pertains to the temporal and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Love can command no richer opportunities for help than this. The improvement of personal habits, educational and social ambitions, and religious aspirations may all be promoted here. Homes may, and should, and do feel the quickening and uplifting power of such association. The value of the Sunday-school as a promoter of the purest and most practical philanthropy has not yet been duly appreciated by the church.

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* *Vide* suggestions of the American Committee of the New Revision.

All this assumes that the church has control of the Sunday-school. There must be one and not two institutions, and that one institution must be the church. And the church must make her power — a power of grace rather than of government — felt in all that concerns the school. The pastor must be recognized as the highest officer of the school, relieved indeed from responsibility for details of administration, but present, as pastor, whenever possible; sustaining it, and identifying himself with it, and not merely patronizing it with an air of superiority and condescension. The superintendent and all other officers should perform their duties in the interest of the church, and no thought of rivalry, as between two institutions, should ever be allowed to enter the mind of a child in the school. The teachers should be members of the church. They should, at the time of their appointment, be publicly installed or otherwise officially recognized before the whole congregation. They should be thoroughly trained in the doctrines and usages of the church they represent, and seek to promote an acquaintance with and loyalty to the church on the part of their pupils. And above all, they should teach those committed to their care what it is to be Christians — well-balanced, consistent, conscientious, gentle, courageous, devout, philanthropic, and faithful Christians, who love God and men, and who long to help men by becoming themselves more and more God-like. This is the true ideal of the church, and nothing less complete should inspire the Sunday-school teacher.

When the Sunday-school announces this as its one lofty aim, and devotes itself with unflinching purpose and unswerving fidelity to its attainment, then will the resources of the church — wealth, scholarship, social influence, time, zeal, piety — be at the complete command of the Sunday-school, and as transepts, chancel, and nave unite in the great cathedrals, so shall sanctuary and Sunday-school combine to create one great temple for the worship of God, the study of Scripture, and the service of humanity.

II

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL

TO reach this, we may perhaps look first at what is not the main purpose of any rightly conducted Sunday-school.

The main purpose is not to supplant the home training of children and young folk; yet many parents send their children to Sunday-school, and think that in this way they fully discharge their religious responsibilities toward their offspring. This is true even in many families in which one or both of the parents have united with the church. Every pastor knows of Christian families where the mother rarely, and the father never, speaks to the children about personal piety. All that is largely relegated to the Sunday-school teacher; so that beyond teaching the children how to pray in their early infancy, little or nothing is done toward their religious training at home. We have even known parents belonging to the church who made a convenience of the Sunday-school, and regarded it as a day nursery, in which their smallest children were safe for an hour or so, while they at the same time were free from their care.

The main purpose is not to provide a sort of "children's church," as a substitute for the regular church service. The idea prevails only too widely that if a child goes to Sunday-school regularly, all shall be well; he need not attend church with his parents. In some way or other, as he grows older, he is expected to attend the preaching service, but just how the change from non-attendance to regular attendance is to be made is not clear to the parental mind. As a result, many thousands of children drop out by the way. When they are about fourteen to sixteen years of age they cease attending Sunday-school, but, alas! they do not then substitute the church service for their "children's church."

The main purpose is not to provide entertainment for the rising generation, by way of such elaborate weekly programmes as might justly be called sacred concerts, or by such frequent sociables, picnics, Christmas, Easter, or flower festivals as the fertile resources of the young ladies may suggest. Festivals should be used in proper reason, but to waste one-quarter to one-half of each year in preparing music and recitations for the various public occasions is an evil and a snare.

Having thus hinted at some misconceptions as to the main purpose of the Sunday-school, let us turn now to a definition of its main purpose. The main purpose of the Sunday-school is:

First. The conversion of the scholar.

Second. Growth in grace of the young convert.

These two objects form the only legitimate goal toward which we should bend our efforts. All other objects are impertinent, except as they coöperate to bring about the above results. Even the memorization and further study of the Word of God is not the main aim of the school. For the Word is learned and studied, not for its own sake, but for the sake of such an influence on the conduct of the scholar as shall make him more Christ-like. For though the pupil knew the Word by heart, and could explain topographies, geographies, antiquities, orientalisms, prophetic passages, and recondite allusions, all would be vain, and worse than vain, were there no result in change of heart and growth in grace. "Ye must be *born again*," said the great Master; and all our use of means in the Sunday-school is merely intended so to influence the soul of the scholar as that he shall go to Him who alone can impart the new nature, and then stimulate it in all Christian graces. Now, holding firmly this aim in all our school work, we may and should use every proper adjunct in the work which is likely to further the one main object. Good music, helpful hymns, attractive rooms, hearty exercises,—these and all other proper aids are legitimate in our work. These things are not ends, but means to an end, and therefore should always be so used as to remain in their subordinate position.

When parents realize that the Sunday-school has this twofold object in view, and that it by no means supplants, but only supplements, home training and influence, a great gain will be made, and our children will reap the benefit. Too often Sunday-school teaching and home influences are in direct antagonism, and the school has to overcome home influence before it can be effective. Where the case is not so bad as this, it still frequently remains true that the home training does not distinctly follow up Sunday-school teaching. It simply ignores it. That is the most blessed family and parish where home training comes first, and is what it should be in doctrine and practice; and where in the Sunday-school the teacher has parental backing and example to reënforce his instructions to the individual scholar. Results will not be long in showing themselves in such a parish.

III

ORGANIZATION AND WORK

I. OFFICERS

EVERY army needs officers; good officers can in time make a good army. With incompetent officers, no army can do much. But officers must be well backed by the Home Government, or they will be unable to work effectively. The church is the Home Government. If the supplies are withheld and coöperation gives way to criticism, no officers can accomplish much. Too many church boards are like Pharaoh,—they want bricks made, but decline to furnish even the needful straw. They leave the officers and teachers to do the work and pay the bills besides, and grumble if all is not done to their satisfaction. Having thus put the whole burden upon the shoulders of the workers, they want to do all the governing themselves. If any church wants good work from its Sunday-school officers, let them be well and even generously treated. Give them the "sinews of war" in sufficient measure, and support them by influence and prayer.

To be properly officered, every school needs one superintendent, one assistant superintendent (a large school needs two, and a very large school, of say one thousand members, needs three), a music leader, a librarian, a treasurer, and a secretary. Large schools need two to five secretaries, according to their size. Most schools are under-officered. The result is that the work is poorly done. Better too many than too few officers. None of these officers need have the gift of public speech, excepting perhaps the superintendent, and even in that office we have known efficient workers who were more brilliant in silence than in utterance. There is thus a field here for many a church-member who cannot "speak in meeting" to do something, and that a very effective something, for the advance of the good cause. In weak parishes where there are more sisters than brethren, let them be called on for service. There is no office in the Sunday-school that may not be well filled by a woman, provided no man can be found; and the offices of librarian, treasurer, and secretary are well adapted to members of the gentle sex.

The officers having been selected and the means having been furnished, it remains for the pastor, as general-in-chief of the army, to see to it that his officers are rightly led, instructed, restrained, encouraged, rewarded. If things go ill, he is to blame. If the librarian is ignorant, the pastor can enlighten him, or at least can give him such literature on the question as shall effect that result. If the music goes badly, and the leader is behind the times, the pastor can do much toward remedying matters. With time, patience, and work, it is surprising how a pastor can influence every department of Sunday-school work, and make his laymen effective in their various places of responsibility. Would that our theological seminaries would spend less time in teaching the church history of one thousand years ago, and more time in showing the students how to shape the church history of one thousand years hence, by wise methods of work to-day? But perhaps this is too large a hope. In spite, however, of much defective seminary training, much can be done by the pastor, if only he have a heart to work in this direction.

II. TEACHERS

THE time was when every layman was expected to be a preacher (see Acts vii. 4). The time came when preaching and teaching was restricted to the clergy. The laity were enjoined to hold their peace. The time has now come when in all Protestant bodies the laity are again becoming active workers in the church. Even in Roman Catholic churches, in this land, they have Sunday-schools with laymen as teachers. We now understand that no church can prosper that leans on its pastor for the doing of everything. Ephesians iv., 12, properly punctuated, reads: "And he gave pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry." That is, the saints were to be perfected (properly prepared) for work, through pastors and ordained teachers. Teaching is thus a duty as well as a privilege, and any one called on by the pastor for this service is bound to give good cause why he should be excused. Church-members are Christ's soldiers, and when called upon for active service, the burden of proof in favor of exemption lies in them. Too often, alas! members feel and act as though it required a direct revelation from Heaven to convince them that they have anything to do with the active work of the church. They regard themselves as passengers, who, having paid their fare, in the shape of pew-rent, must be left in peace. That this is true may be seen by the fact that the churches in which one-half or even one-quarter of the members are doing any work are exceedingly few. One of the most difficult of "Parish Problems" lies just here.

But, turning from this part of the theme, we would call attention now to the teacher's work. It may be divided into two heads:

First. Work outside of the class.

Second. Work inside of the class.

First and foremost, under the first head, comes the study of the lesson. Fortunately, the helps to this, in our days, are numerous and most excellent. The very best minds in the land are at work, preparing the lessons for the army of teachers. Let the teacher avail himself of such help. Let him not be deterred by the cry of "crutches," which he may perchance hear at conventions. So far as we have observed, this cry is generally raised by ministers whose library shelves are full of commentaries, and who never go into the pulpit without a manuscript sermon. Crutches are good for lame people, and most teachers are lame at the first, anyway. Use these lesson-help "crutches," then, so long as you need them, but all the time aim to walk alone so far as is possible. No teacher is fit to go before any class without careful and prayerful preparation of the lesson. And yet we have known a teacher chide the class for not preparing the lesson before they came to the class, who himself had more than once asked the class, "Where is the lesson to-day? I really have not looked at it."

But besides the study of the lesson, there are many ways in which teachers may supplement and reënforce their work in the class. Visiting the scholars in their homes is one of these. In unruly classes this is a great lever in the hands of the teacher. Rude boys are almost always less rude if the teacher has called upon them in their homes, or has invited the boys to her home. We have repeatedly seen a complete transformation wrought in the deportment of a class of rude boys by one sociable given by the teacher. In large cities much may be done by letter-writing. In the average class of say eight scholars, one letter a week would give each of the scholars six letters a year, and yet not over-burden the teacher. Our scholars prize letters far more than we are apt to think. Every teacher should, if possible, receive some good Sunday-school periodical and read it carefully. He may there find many hints as to ways of working which will prove very useful to him. In addition to such ways of working outside of the class, we would earnestly recommend every teacher to attend every Sunday-school convention which may be held within his reach. Such gatherings are very helpful, not only because information is there received, but because enthusiasm is enkindled and fresh energy imparted.

Second. Work inside of the class. There are certain characteristics of a good teacher which are very easily discerned. The good teacher, for example, is always prompt in attendance. If ever he is late, it is because something very unusual has happened to detain him, as, for instance, an earthquake, or a cyclone, or his own death. Otherwise he is always in his place in time. The good teacher always greets his scholars pleasantly and speaks to them individually before the school opens. He is always ready to support and honor the superintendent, and never criticises him before the class. By example, the good teacher leads the scholars to unite in responsive readings, and (if possible) in singing. The good teacher sees to it that his scholars take out good library books, and that his class gives heartily and regularly to the missionary offering. Above all, the good teacher is never satisfied until he sees his scholars converted to Christ, and growing in every divine grace. To this end, the good teacher will seek for chances to speak to and pray with each member of the class, alone, that by personal influence, as well as teaching, the class may be led to the blessed Saviour. If thus, out of the class, and in the class, the disciple works faithfully, the scholars will be blessed and the teacher will realize that there is no more joyful work in all the world than that of teaching immortal souls.

III. THE HOUR

There is no best hour for meeting. At the same time some hours have fewer drawbacks than others. Many schools meet at 9.30 A. M., and pass right from school to church. This makes a large draught on the endurance of the younger scholars, who, only too often, compromise matters by absenting themselves from the church services entirely. It also brings the school into the church services somewhat tired, and by so much unfitted to profit by the sermon. Many schools have their sessions after the morning service. This, too, makes too great a demand on the endurance of the scholars and teachers. Besides, the school hour is cut short, at times, by a sermon longer than usual, and yet cannot make the loss good, at the other end, because lunch, or dinner, calls loudly for the attention of the school. Other schools, again, are held in the afternoon. Yet this has the disadvantage of calling the teachers from their homes for that especial service. But the advantages of an afternoon session are many. In the first place, there is time enough. The exercises need not be infringed upon by an unusually long sermon nor cut short by the dinner hour. Thus due attention can be paid to the devotional and praise service without curtailing the lesson hour. There is no sense of hurry, and that in itself is a great gain. The morning hours are no longer so crowded for the teachers, and scholars cannot plead "too long service" for non-attendance on the church service. The experience of many pastors, both in city and country churches, goes to show that for the majority of churches there are fewer drawbacks to the afternoon as the time of meeting than to either of the morning hours usually selected. If the afternoon be the time chosen, then one hour and a half would probably be the best length of the session. There is always sufficient variety in Sunday-school exercises to prevent the time from dragging, and one hour and a half gives ample time for exercises other than those of lesson-teaching. As a suggestion, we submit the following plan of service:

2.30. Call for order. Singing.
2.35. Prayer.
2.38. Singing. Sing several hymns. Practice any new tunes that may be desirable.
2.50. Responsive reading of some portions of Scripture.
2.55. Singing.
3.00. Responsive reading of lesson.
3.05. Notices.
3.08 - 3.45. Lesson study.
3.45. Singing.
3.49. Review from platform.
3.55. Singing and close.

IV. WORSHIP

Many people call everything that precedes the sermon "preliminary exercises." This is a sad mistake. Can the worship of God in prayer and praise be properly called "preliminary"? So, too, they call the devotional part of the Sunday-school hour "opening exercises." This too is wrong; worship is more than a mere "opening exercise"; it is as important as lesson-study, and we think it would be as well to call the lesson-study a "supplementary exercise" as to call worship an "opening exercise."

A great fault in many schools lies in the careless way in which the devotional part of the service is conducted. Scholars are permitted to enter the room, secretary and librarian rush around on their various errands, and subdued disorder prevails. All this is radically wrong. It instills into the youthful mind the idea that devotion is an unimportant thing which "belongs to" the school session, but calls for no especial attention. In my opinion as much care should be given to this part of the service as to any other. Scholars should be taught the meaning of "joining in prayer" and the nature of tuneful worship. Reverent attitude should be insisted on, and teachers and officers, by example as well as precept, should keep their scholars so that a devotional spirit might be cultivated, as well as a reverent posture of body. In this way the whole tone of the school will be raised, and it will be felt to be a *religious* gathering.

IV

THE LESSON

THE Sunday-school is a school, and must have its lessons. It is a church-school, and must teach the lessons which it is the business of the church to teach. It is not, indeed, the only department of the church which teaches, but it is intended to supplement and coöperate with the other departments,— the home, the pulpit, the prayer-meeting, the fellowship-meeting, and the religious press,— all of which are designed to teach. The Sunday-school furnishes special arrangements by which good teaching is facilitated,— the subdivision into small classes; the appointment of trained and experienced teachers; the assignment of lessons; the provision of helps in preparation for both teachers and pupils; the adjustment of the programme to uninterrupted class work, and an after-review from the superintendent's desk. The distinctive idea of the Sunday-school is that of study; worship is incidental. Or, we may say that it is introduced as a help to profitable study.

The Sunday-school must therefore have its lessons; and these must be drawn from the Word of God, and from that only. The Sunday-school is a Bible-school; and the study of the Bible is work enough for the institution. It would be enough if the school were to spend upon it three hours of every day in the week. The Bible is a great book, and full, and rich. The habit of reading and meditating upon its contents is invaluable in an intellectual way. It stimulates the imagination, strengthens the reason, quickens the perceptions, gives insight into human character, tones up the conscience, promotes self-knowledge, begets a healthful self-distrust and then a genuine self-confidence. But then the grace of God acts through the truth of God. It is the medium of supernatural energies. Spiritual quickening, conversion, sanctification, strength, and the grace to live a holy life come to the soul of man through the Word of God. We do not claim that there is a latent, divine energy in the Scriptures, but we do claim that under certain conditions a divine energy does operate through it. There is no efficient electricity in the suspended wire of the telegraph, but under specified conditions that wire becomes the pathway of an invisible fire that flashes, in a second of time, from shore to shore. Now, the Sunday-school is set apart for the study of the Word of God; for the study of its letter, for the seeking of its spiritual meanings, and for the life which it brings to the soul. A Sunday-school that does not make Bible study — with a religious purpose — its one all-controlling object is not a true Sunday-school.

Arrange these lessons as you will,— into "regular lessons" and "special lessons," or into lessons for the Sunday-school session proper, and lessons for the week-day, or into the present popular division of "international lessons" and "supplemental lessons,"— but let everything taught in the Sunday-school be brought out of the Bible, as the one only text-book of the institution. The mode is not a matter of much moment. That the school really studies the Holy Scriptures is the main thing.

The Bible lesson should be studied Bible in hand. This is for many reasons the better way, but not always most convenient. It should be urged upon teachers and scholars. A little effort may soon overcome the reluctance which most persons feel, and everybody in the Sunday-school may own and use a Bible. But it will not do to talk as though we are not studying the Bible at all, simply because we have in hand one of its sixty-six books, or one of the chapters or paragraphs from one of the books, instead of the entire volume. Such talk is fanaticism. A man may be a student of Homer or Virgil, of Shakespeare or Wordsworth, even though he use a school text-book containing but a poem or two from each of these authors. When Jesus was in the synagogue at Nazareth, "there was delivered unto him the book of the Prophet Isaiah," and out of that he read, and then expounded its contents. He did not have in hand at the time the roll of the law of Moses, nor the book of Psalms, but yet he read and expounded "this Scripture." Let us have common sense and discretion, while we try to do the best work we can for our pupils; and whether we use modern question books, lesson-leaves, books of the Bible published in separate covers, the New Testament, or the whole twelve hundred pages of the Bible itself, let us teach to those who come to us the quick and powerful Word of God.

Human helps are not to be discarded in teaching the Sunday-school lesson. What are sermons but human helps? What minister discards commentators? But human helps are to be selected carefully and used judiciously. They should be consulted as much as possible at home, and as little as possible in the class. They should be used at home, only after careful, personal, independent, prayerful study of the lesson by teacher or scholar. He who will not think on his own account, because he has helps to consult, will not be likely to think independently when he has no helps. The clergyman without a library will not preach better nor more original and vigorous sermons than the clergyman who has access to all the best expositors and sermonizing of the Christian ages.

The "uniform lesson," or the idea of the same lesson in all the classes of a school, has come not only to embrace the thought of the same lesson in all the schools of a community city, state, or country, but to take the wider sweep, like the week of prayer, of all Sunday-schools in all denominations throughout Christendom. To a very remarkable degree, the movement in this direction has proved successful.

The advantages of the uniform scheme are many. It increases the value of the teachers' meeting; it encourages Bible study at home, every member of the family circle being interested in one subject; it utilizes all the exercises of the Sunday-school session,— hymn, prayer, and general addresses,— and makes all contribute to the impressing of one great thought; it makes general reviews possible and effective; it gives the pastor opportunity to supervise the work of Biblical instruction in his school; it increases his advantage in the pulpit, and makes practicable a curriculum of Biblical study in his whole church.

The adoption of this lesson scheme beyond the single school and denomination has great advantages. It advertises Bible study in the community; it exalts the Bible over the creeds; it increases Biblical research by securing a richer literature —

all periodicals striving to furnish the best helps on the current lessons; it gives a topic of conversation to Sunday-school people when they meet casually during the week; it promotes a comparison of methods for studying and teaching a lesson; it makes possible a general teachers' meeting, where the best talent of each church may be used for the benefit of all the rest; it is preëminently adapted to us as a traveling nation, so that, to whatever neighborhood or State our teachers or scholars may journey for a visit, for summer recreation or for permanent residence, they will keep up the same course of study, and always know where to open their Bible to find the Sunday-school lesson on a given day; and again, it publishes to the world the true unity of the Christian church, which appeals to the Bible as its final authority, and is able to study in harmony its wonderful contents.

The international idea is a still further and even more sublime development of the lesson system. It is the protest of the Christian heart against the attempted unity of the Babel-builders against the God of heaven, and the perpetuation of that Pentecostal time when the tongues of all nations were heard in Jerusalem proclaiming the praise of Christ. It fosters a blessed sentiment of universal Christian unity, stretches a cable of sympathy around the globe, and tends to the fulfillment of the prophecy, "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth." The extent of the international scheme is a surprise to those who projected it.

The seven-years' course of Bible lessons begun in 1873, embracing in its selections more than seven hundred and fifty lessons, for the most part chronological in their arrangement, was again begun in 1880, and closed on the last Sunday of December, 1886. The third series began in 1887, and will continue for seven years longer. These lessons cover all the salient topics of the Bible every seven years, and constitute the basis for a complete system of Bible study in the church. The lad of five years who in 1873 studied the stories of Genesis, after having taken a child's view of the whole Bible, began again at twelve years of age in 1880 to study the same subjects, and in 1887, as a young man of nineteen, he again takes up the same course. How different his shifting points of vision! How admirable the plan which gives him this opportunity for the comprehensive and progressive study of the Word of God!

The international lesson system is not sufficient for the purposes of the Sunday-school. There must be a systematic arrangement of Bible lessons, which shall accompany these more general selections—lessons in the general "make-up" of the Bible, as a book of many books, written by different men in different ages, and for different ends; lessons in the leading biographies of the book; in its history, geography, institutions, laws, doctrines, and provinces; lessons in the church history, general and denominational; lessons in missionary, temperance, and other philanthropic ministries; together with copious memory-lessons by which choice portions of Scripture, the hymns of the Christian ages, and the vigorous and simple catechism of the church may be put into the minds of our youths. These "supplemental" lessons are indispensable to the success of the school as a part of the church.

V

GRADING THE SCHOOL

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL will, if left alone, grade itself. Personal likes and dislikes will grade it. Scholars who "take to" each other will "take to" a teacher, and the lines be drawn between "our class" and "the rest." Social standing will adjust matters, and the avenues of the city or the style of the hat will run their lines through the aisles and across the benches of the Sunday-school. But all such grading is evil and will work evil. It is not well to have a Sunday-school grade itself.

The school must break up into certain general divisions. Little people who cannot read and scarcely know their letters will drop into one corner or be put into one room, and then we have the infant or the primary grade. Very old people who use glasses, when they look into the Word, and middle-aged people who, whether they use glasses or not, do have a liking for "doctrine" and "controversy" and "hard questions,"—these all will get into the same neighborhood and constitute, however unwise and undiscriminating the ground of their association may be, the old folks' grade. Young people who are not old, and who don't care one iota for doctrine, and who do detest both controversy and hard questions, and who take but the slightest interest in anything except dress and manners and good looks and a good time,—these will fall into a conspicuous place, and have a teacher assigned to them (God's pity on the teacher!), and constitute the young people's grade. Well, between the infants and the young people comes a turbulent crowd of boys and girls, of different ages and different social conditions and different standing in the day-schools. They go together—that is, the boys go on one side and the girls on the other side of the central space left for them; and in classes organized in part by themselves, in part by the teachers, and in part by the superintendent constitute the intermediate or middle grade of the school. There you have a graded school organized by a sort of natural selection. All schools will gravitate into some such general assortment of material: infant, intermediate, young people, and old people. That is a graded school of one kind; and whatever other standards you employ, your work will begin with this general division, and when you are through, this same general division will remain.

Many years ago, in 1855, and notably in 1857, the writer of these pages conducted a graded Sunday-school. He was not the superintendent, but he was both pastor and assistant superintendent at that time, and for years after. He believed that as pastor he could make suggestions, and as assistant superintendent carry them out through the superintendent. His theory was correct, and so far as his own practice was concerned, he had no difficulty whatever in securing the hearty coöperation of his associates in office. There is no plan which in these thirty-five years of Sunday-school service he has been permitted to suggest and defend which he did not himself test in the actual management of a Sunday-school. In 1857 he had a school in which were primary, intermediate, senior, adult, normal, and supplemental grades. The normal class studied diligently, and every Sunday recited from James Inglis's admirable manual on "The Sunday-school," pursuing at the same time a course of lessons on the "Life of Paul," based on Conybeare and Howson's work. Every Saturday the writer drilled a large class in Bible history and geography by the use of maps, blackboard, and lesson-cards. Every Sabbath the regular lesson of the day was supplemented by catechetical drills from the desk in lessons on the "Books of the Bible," the "Catechism of the Church," or other "Memory-lessons."

In 1878 the following outline of a scheme of study for a graded school in connection with the International Series was presented at the International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia: (1) *The Primary*, which shall cover *two* years, embracing the lessons of the International course; a few of the Psalms; a simple catechism on the Bible as a book; simple outlines of Bible history and geography; selections from the church catechism, and two or three standard hymns. (2) *The*

Intermediate, which shall cover two years, during which the pupil studies the International lessons; commits to memory certain selected texts; is drilled in an advanced course of Bible history and geography; gives more study to the Bible as a book of books; takes up church catechism No. 2; commits more church hymns, and is taught a few lessons in temperance and missionary work. The pupil now passes into (3) *The Senior*, which shall cover three years, continuing the International lessons; committing more choice texts of Scripture; studying more thoroughly the outlines of Bible history and geography; the advanced catechism of the church; more hymns; outlines of church history, general and denominational, and more temperance and missionary lessons. (4) *The Advanced* follows. This has no limit as to time. It shall embrace the International series; special classes for exegetical studies; lectures on the evidences, church history, the relations of science and religion; courses of sermons on systematic theology; a series of text-books bearing on these and other topics to be read and studied, and a normal class for those who are to be the teachers of the Sunday-school later on.

These general plans are capable of an infinite variety of modifications and adaptations. The fundamental principles remain the same, whatever outward and systematic form they may take.

There is a temptation to carry the idea of gradation too far, and to seek in the Sunday-school the precision of method which prevails in our secular schemes. The promotion of pupils from grade to grade or from class to class, at given times and under the working of a stereotyped plan, may prove to the last degree pernicious. In the secular school, wisely or unwisely, a given system is introduced and operated without regard to circumstances. What may prove on the whole useful there may be most disastrous in the Sunday-school, which is other and more than a day-school. Gradation by attainment, after the test of examination, might separate a pupil from a teacher whose simple relation (sacred as that of the pastorate itself, and somewhat akin to it) is worth more in one Sunday's fellowship than would be possible to that pupil under another teacher, however gifted and efficient, for a whole year. The rule of the heart is a mightier dominion than that of the intellect. In the secular school, the brain and all that pertains to it is in the ascendant, and gradation and promotion are practicable. But in the Sunday-school, the heart and all that has to do with mutual love and trust, and personal influence with all its mystical energies,— these are dominant, and long may they remain so. Sunday-school is Sunday-school, and not secular school. It may gather many lessons from the wise masters of pedagogy, and it may teach them some lessons, worth as much as any they have to give; but we must not let an iron system of lessons, years, and promotions cut off heart-strings and sever cables of spiritual influence. Let us be a Sunday-school, with religious impulses, purposes, and experiences predominant, while we use, and use well, all the secular accessions which are so much glorified, and perhaps none too much in these days of education and progress.

There are several admirable graded schools in the United States, and they are making experiments and steadily modifying their systems, seeking and expecting to find an approximately perfect system of Sunday-school gradation.

VI

THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

THE Sunday-school has the name of being a children's school, and in most places such it is. Children's songs, children's talks, children's lessons, children's papers are found in it. An announcement of a Sunday-school sermon in the church, on a given day, leads everybody to expect a sermon to or a sermon about children. Historically, the Sunday-school is a children's institution. So far, well, because children need the Sunday-school and it should be adapted to them — to their tastes and to their needs. They should feel at home there, and as the best grammar school and the best primary school are better suited to children than the higher forms of the high school, or the recitation-rooms and methods of the college, so should the Sunday-school, be adapted to children.

Unfortunately, all superintendents are not able to organize and conduct the school so as to make it most attractive or useful even to little people. Few people in this world understand children; few grown-up people sympathize with them, and very few are able to teach or talk to them sensibly or profitably. Men try to "adapt" themselves to what is called "the juvenile capacity," and in nine cases out of ten make ridiculous failures; and give, instead of simplicity, childishness, and instead of adaptation, a puerility which excites the contempt even of the children.

Mature and aged men and women are not so much annoyed by this blunder as are the little people themselves. They merely smile at the silliness, which finds place in song, speech, and programme, supposing that these are all legitimate and necessary, and they bear patiently "for the sake of the children" what the children neither need nor relish.

But meanwhile serious damage is being done in another quarter. There are more than two classes — the children and the old people — in our Sunday-schools. There is another class, made up of pupils who are neither children nor adults —

the "young people" of the community, who are more in need than either (if that be possible) of religious instruction and influence, and who are far more sensitive than the children themselves to the vapidities already deplored. While parents and other old people endure these absurdities through the mistaken idea that they are indispensable, the young people are often simply disgusted; and whether they leave the school, or through respect for parents or the demands of conscience remain in it, they are repelled to a degree not appreciated by the leaders of the church.

The common fame of the school as a meeting place of children, only aggravates the evil; and young people who are *not* children, and who, more than ever before or ever after, dislike being regarded as children, are subjected to uncomfortable treatment, well designed, perhaps, by speakers, teachers, and superintendents, but resulting in alienation, contempt, and silent resolve, which may not always prove as disastrous as they promise, but which are injurious enough to justify some experiment calculated to prevent all such indifference or antipathy.

The most serious problems of our modern home and church life are those which relate to the young people. We cannot here attempt a full answer, but must call the attention of pastors and church officers to a few suggestions:

First. The lines should be drawn as sharply in the Sunday-school between the primary and intermediate and the senior departments as in our public school system. Children and all grades of adults may associate in the public service, because there they represent the family in its entirety; but it does not seem judicious to assign girls and boys (who are eager, whether wisely or not, speedily to outgrow the conditions and limitations of childhood) to places by the side of little children. Wise educators, who study the instincts of human nature and adjust their plans accordingly, are cautious in this respect. The first development of manhood is recognized and its importance as well as its self-importance appreciated. The teachers of the high school do not appeal to the "dear children," and talk childish talk in monosyllabic simplicity, with illuminated illustrations, until the patience of every sensible youth is exhausted and his indignation excited. The church must be as wise as the world.

Second. Is it not possible to limit the Sunday-school itself to children, and for the senior pupils provide another, higher, more dignified department of the church, and give to it a different name? How would it do to call this department "The Assembly," and to bring into it the young people over fifteen years of age? The public exercises of this "senior grade" or "assembly" should be of a somewhat different character from those of the Sunday-school. There should be a difference in the adaptation of the subject matter as well as in the manner and the tone of the service; lectures and outlines in the place of mere drills; independent statements by individual pupils and teachers, instead of simultaneous responses; a higher class of music; carefully conducted doctrinal expositions and discussions, the methods of the college, rather than those of the primary or grammar school, controlling the hour.

Third. We must treat our older pupils with less levity, with more respect and seriousness; put them under the care of discreet and cultivated teachers; place in their hands the best and strongest literature; enlist them in organizations for church work, for personal, intellectual and social improvement; open the best parlors of the best homes in the church, under proper restrictions, to welcome and entertain them; and above all seek to bring them to an early, hearty, and complete surrender of themselves to the service of God and man in the best type of Christian life.

VII

SUNDAY-SCHOOL BENEVOLENCE

THE most perfect scheme of humanitarianism is that of evangelical Christianity. It makes more of man as man, and proposes to do more for him than any other theory of human nature, or any other system of human education and improvement. Its fundamental ideas exalt man as to the source of his being, his perils, his destiny, and as to the divine provisions for his restoration from sin, and future transformation into the divine likeness.

It is well to look upon man as a physical being, and to feel pity for him because of his hunger and improvidence, his pains and carelessness, his home discomforts, his dissipations and failures. And it is well, if plans of help be wise, and wisely executed, to be eager to give him aid in his extremity. But his is a larger benevolence and a more real beneficence who thinks of man as an immortal soul, of his sorrows and distresses as either results of his own wrong doing or as gracious interventions for his present discipline and future benefit, and who, thinking these things, proffers the best help that one man can give another — faith in God, loathing of sin, and love of holiness. It is a good thing to pity and feed and clothe the body. It is a better thing to pity and help the soul. Truly wise beneficence looks after both soul and body, but anxiety about the soul of man supplies the highest motive for ministering to the necessities of his body.

The church is a monument on the earth, commemorating the royal and infinite love of God for man. It teaches the world that God is love, that Christ, because of his love, came to die for a guilty race. Love is the substance of all the law he laid down. Love is the subjective force from which spring all spiritual graces and delights in the Christian life. The test of the judgment will be the measure of love for Christ, as manifested in ministry of relief to men. The church is a monument and a fountain of love.

What the church is, the Sunday-school must be. What the church ought to do, the Sunday-school ought to train its members to do. As its members are chiefly children, and as, consequently, the church of to-morrow is the Sunday-school of to-day, it is imperative that all leaders in this part of church activity shall keep before the school the one great law of love for man, as expressed in pity for his sufferings, grief because of his sins, and honest, indefatigable, Christian effort for his good. If there is a place where, more than another, the nature, ends, grounds, and methods of Christian benevolence should be explained, exalted, and illustrated, that place is the Sunday-school.

This is now done, but to a very limited extent, and very often, it may be safely said, with motives as mixed as are the methods questionable. We do take up collections for the cause of foreign missions, and in emergencies for churches or towns that have been burned down, blown down, or shaken down, or for sufferers from plagues, savages, or dynamite. Pathetic appeals are made, money is raised, the amount reported amidst applause from the crowd that gave it, and a record made on the secretary's book for future reference. And children are taught to believe that this is "benevolence!"

The methods of giving to missionary and other philanthropic causes deserve further consideration. The earthly motives, the ingenious plans, the carnal rivalries, the puerile displays which accompany missionary collections in the average Sunday-school may be "necessary" to certain financial results, but they are the abuse of a great opportunity, and often result in more harm to the givers than they can confer benefit upon the receivers. The funds that are raised to promote Christian humility among barbarians abroad should not in the raising develop vanity in the benefactors at home. A gift intended to foster reverence among heathen should not have its beginning in frivolity and hilarity. What is meant to make benighted souls on foreign shores honest and unselfish should not develop guile and ambition in our own churches. These statements are made and reiterated to expose certain possible and actual evils in what is called "Sunday-school benevolence."

Benevolence must express itself in beneficence, and the act of help must be intelligent. The Sunday-school should foster the loving impulse, secure the prompt effort, and direct the whole movement by a full knowledge of the occasion and the grounds of the action. Intelligence contributes to philanthropy. The church needs more light as well as more love in missionary and in all eleemosynary service. Here, then, are three things to be done in promoting Sunday-school benevolence:

First. The field of Sunday-school helpfulness is to be extended. Children must do more than contribute to foreign missions. Every cause to which the church is committed should be presented to the Sunday-school and a chance supplied for "collections." Little children should become familiar with the great organizations which help men — "The Bible Society," "The Domestic Missions," "The Foreign Missions," "The Tract Society," "The Sunday-school Society," "Union" or "Department," "The Freedmen's Aid," "The Church Extension," "The Board of Education," "The Asylums," "The Poor of the Congregation," "The Mission-schools," with their "Kindergartens," or "Kitchen-gardens," "The Temperance Movement," "The White Cross," — anything, everything with sympathy and help in it, which the minister approves and the church officers commend should have a hearing in the Sunday-school, even where the collections for the purpose are taken in the public congregation. Children should learn that giving is a means of grace, and that non-giving members of the church yray in vain. Thus we may broaden the horizon of our youth, and cause the church to stand in the center of a larger and nobler world than they had dreamed of before.

Second. Intelligence is to be circulated that children may know to what and why they give. What a fascinating, and yet what a solemn world, would open before them, if the facts of history, geography, domestic manners and customs, social sufferings, struggles of honest poverty, patience under pain and bereavement, and all the range of possible knowledge involved in the subject, were to be presented from week to week in Sunday-school, in the pulpit, and at special meetings. Life would be more real, the church would seem more divine.

The Sunday-school would enlist deeper and livelier sympathy. Children would respect it more.

Third. Feeling and action should go hand in hand. It is not enough to see the wide and various world, nor to know all the facts which it furnishes. The facts must be so presented as to excite pity. The provisions made for help should be as clearly set forth. And then, at once, opportunity should be given to every child to contribute something or to do something, or in some way to deny himself toward the practical removal of the evil, relief of the suffering, or prevention of the sin. Then would the Sunday-school become in every true sense a school of Christian disciples, who, taking the Master's yoke upon them, go about, as did he, doing good to men.

Our missionary leaders, who now have almost a monopoly of Sunday-school benevolences, need not fear that a multiplication of interests and demands would diminish their revenues. Indeed, the increase of knowledge and of sympathy for which this chapter pleads would augment confidence in the missionary cause, compassion for those who are without the Gospel, and contributions to the society which aims to give them the word of life. A more immediate and practical sympathy with next-door guilt and want and sorrow would increase sympathy with the wide world of humanity, and lead to more intelligent and liberal giving to the race at large "in his name," who "tasted death for every man."

VIII

PERFORMANCES AND PRIZES

I. PUBLIC EXERCISES

BY these we mean Sunday-school concerts, Christmas festivals, flower festivals, harvest homes, Easter celebrations, and such like. In large city schools the Sunday-school concert has died out; but in country churches it is still one of the most popular of services. It is not our purpose, nor does our space permit us, to give minute directions as to the conduct of such services. We can only call attention to some features of these exercises in general, which we deem objectionable, and thus indicate what, in our judgment, should be the governing aims of all public meetings managed by Sunday-school leaders.

I. OBJECTIONABLE FEATURES. (*a.*) Recitations by the very little children who are of such tender age as to require a chair to stand on in order to be seen. (We have even seen them placed on the piano.) These little ones are generally overdressed by fond mammas, who thus combine with teachers and officers in cultivating pertness on the part of the "rising generation." (*b.*) Any exercises so elaborate as to require the school to surrender part of the lesson-time for "practice." Some schools are thus demoralized once or twice a year for several weeks at a time. This is a great evil. A Brooklyn superintendent tells us that for weeks before their grand outdoor "Sunday-school Parade," their schools are much injured by the preparation and anticipatory excitement of the scholars. All drill for extra ervices should be done outside of the lesson-time. (*c.*) Dramatic performances are not well in our Sunday-school work. And this altogether apart from their intrinsic character. To substitute Santa Claus for the Christ-child, at Christmas, is really a going backward to heathenism and an abandonment of the central thought at Christmas-time. There is only one appropriate theme on the 25th of December. So at Easter, the one dominant theme of the season should not be lost sight of, or even partly concealed under flowers. Easter nowadays has developed into a religious "flower-show and concert" in too many of our churches, and the schools show a tendency to follow their example.

II. THE GOVERNING AIMS. All public exercises should be distinctively religious. No side attractions or adornments should be so exaggerated as to hide the main object in view. All recitations, flowers, harvest displays, music, dialogues, should be made to illustrate the one thought of the hour. In this way our public exercises would not be less interesting to the audiences, but they would be far more profitable to all concerned.

II. REWARDS AND PRIZES

OPINIONS differ widely as to the expediency of offering premiums or prizes in Sunday-school. There are good workers who claim that by offering prizes to our scholars we set before them low and sordid motives. The scholars, they say, should do their duty for the love of it, and not for rewards of a temporal nature. On the other hand, is it not true that God has placed all effort in this world on such a basis that effort meets always with reward? How much would our business men do were they to meet with no reward for their labor, other than the consciousness of having done their duty? Does not the Bible hold out to Christians the "recompense of the reward," as a legitimate motive for steadfast endurance? Does not Paul exhort believers so to run that they may obtain the prize? It seems to us that if we base our reward system in Sunday-school on the same principles on which divine rewards are placed, they will do not harm, but good. Human prizes are given, generally, to the one that does "best." A hundred may run, but only one wins the prize. Divine rewards are given to all who do equal work. If the hundred come in abreast, each receives a prize equal to that of the others. In some schools rewards are offered the scholar who memorizes the largest number of verses. This often promotes jealousy. Would it not be far better to set up a reasonable standard, and then reward every scholar who attained that standard? This is the system adopted in many first-class schools, and so far as our experience goes, it works well. Of one thing we are confident, namely, that the indiscriminate giving of presents at Christmas has wrought much evil in our large mission schools. The universal testimony is that it causes a rush of children into the school shortly before the time for the distribution of gifts, who, as soon as they have received their "plunder," again graduate into the streets of the city. All such giving works evil, and evil only. If rewards are given (and we believe in them) they should be given for merit only, and these should be as carefully fitted to the degree of merit as is possible.

IX

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY

BOOKS are a mighty adjunct in religious teaching. The pastor who does not select them for his people, commend them, lend them to his people, does not know how to use them for himself. The circulating library, connected with the church, is an admirable instrument to guide the thoughts and stimulate the spiritual life of the people, while promoting their mental culture. Where the home or public library is good, the Sunday-school library is valuable as a supplement. Where the home library is bad, it is valuable as a substitute; and where there are no other books its value cannot be overestimated.

It is not necessary here to pay much attention to current criticism of Sunday-school books. Much of it is given by those who wish to have it understood that they were never so weak as to read what they criticise; more by elderly people who base on early recollections judgments which are as useless as other criticisms on the Sunday-school, of the same sort. Any book is a Sunday-school book which can be used to help the aims of the Sunday-school; and criticisms of the Sunday-school library must be broad enough to cover all such books. The use and selection of the library are much more open to criticism than the books themselves. I will therefore briefly summarize some statements concerning its object, selection, and use, which I have made at greater length in a small volume called "The Sunday-school Library."

I. ITS OBJECT. It seeks the same results as the sermon or other religious teaching, to win the people to begin Christian living, and to stimulate and guide them in its enjoyments and duties. Its aim is narrower than that of the public or household library, just as the aim of the pulpit and Sunday-school is narrower than that of the lecture platform or the public school. Books which have no higher purpose than the amusement or the mental cultivation of readers do not belong here. Sunday-school books should promote the one great object for which the church exists.

II. Its Selection. The books should be those and only those which will promote the object of the church and school. They should convey with attractiveness and truthfulness moral and religious truth.

They should display care and taste in their production, and be free from coarseness, sentimentality, or exaggeration.

They should be chosen to fit the circumstances, abilities, and tastes of those who are expected to read them.

They should be numerous and various as sermons are; for, the object of the library is the same as that of the sermon. We do not expect the pastor to prepare a few masterpieces, and repeat them over and over. Neither should the Sunday-school library be confined to a few classics, but should have frequent, fresh additions of books that present truth in winning ways. The sermon and the book has each its own purpose, and when they have produced the impressions intended, their work for the time is done. We cannot have ideal sermons or books; but we can find a sufficient variety to keep before young minds the truths we wish to impress on their lives.

Important topics should have due emphasis in the selection of these books. Home and school life, the duties of citizens of this earthly and of the heavenly kingdom, should be attractively pictured; the principles that underlie these should be illustrated by noble deeds, and noble lives such as people have lived and can live.

Each Sunday-school should have its permanent committee for selection. An ideal committee would be a wise mother, an experienced teacher, a literary editor, an intelligent boy and girl, all Christians, chosen for a term of years. This committee should say, in their written catalogue for the use of teachers, why each book was chosen, and what it is expected to do. Fifty loaded rifles, well aimed, are worth more than barrels of bullets.

The various committees, such as the "Hartford Ladies' Commission," who are competent for their work, and the fruits of whose labors are offered to Sunday-schools without charge, have done excellent service for local committees. They cannot select libraries suited to every Sunday-school; but they have relieved inexperienced committees from the examination of a multitude of books of little value. From their selection the choice for the local Sunday-school can easily be made.

Books are cheapest which are selected for a definite purpose rather than on account of their price-mark. Books worth having at all, ought to be well bound. Books that go begging for a market can always be had at low rates, and where they can be mixed with better books, the price of the whole lot can be reduced. But such bargains, considered in reference to the object for which they are bought, are costly. Denominational publishing houses are created for the purpose of serving the churches. They are under the direction of trusted, Christian men, who oversee their business without remuneration. Their aim is moral and spiritual rather than to make money. They make a specialty of Sunday-school literature. They are the property of the churches and Sunday-schools, to whose advancement whatever profits they gain are devoted. The churches should see that these societies are efficiently managed, and then should avail themselves of their services.

III. Its Use. Books are good for nothing unless they are made to work. Good tools do not execute good work in careless or unskilled hands. Some simple plan of coöperation between the pastor, superintendent, librarian, and teacher can make each book that deserves a place in the library earn its living. Let the pastor give occasional short talks on reading, showing what books will best help readers, and how the right use of them will lead into new fields of thought and action. Let the superintendent mention one good book or more each Sunday, and give a reason why it is valuable. Let the librarian have a bulletin for his new books, and write a brief description under each title. Let the teacher acquaint himself with the books, and introduce his scholars to them, telling them something about their authors, characters, and aims; and let him occasionally ask his scholars to give some account of their reading, and what thoughts it has awakened. Wisely selected and used, the Sunday-school library becomes an indispensable instrument in the church, and in the community, refining the tastes, furnishing noble ideas, correcting wrong impressions, informing with truth, winning readers to Christ, and qualifying them for Christian service, in a time of greater opportunities for noble living than any other generation was ever called to enter.

X

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MUSIC

THE great prominence now universally accorded to music in the Sunday-school, and its wonderful influence over mind and heart, combine to make it doubly important that this subject should receive most careful and thoughtful attention from all who are responsible for the moral and religious education of the young. It has too often been left to the whimsical tastes of children or the childish caprices of adults, and regarded mainly as a question of entertainment rather than of a religious exercise. As a consequence, many collections of Sunday-school songs have teemed with meaningless rhymes and sentimental ditties, set to music essentially weak and frivolous in its character. Happily there has of late been quite a general movement toward better things, but in the vast majority of schools there is yet room for great improvement.

Sometimes this much-needed reform has been undertaken by professional musicians alone, entirely upon the basis of musical æsthetics, without special regard to the religious element; and some of these, instead of trying to *lead* the people gradually to a higher plane, have attempted to *drive* the masses to the use of that which, from lack of musical culture, they did not understand, and in which they could, therefore, feel no interest. And so Sunday-school music has been used in a sort of "battledoor and shuttlecock" game, between stilted dignity on the one side, and gushing puerility on the other, until it is not easy to persuade people that there can be any tenable intermediate ground upon which all might unite in harmony.

We assume that the hymns and the music should be no less pure, devout, and worshipful in the Sunday-school than in the preaching service: (1.) Because the Sunday-school is (or ought to be) one of the religious services of the church, held not only for the study of the Word of God, but also for his worship. (2.) Because it is held on the holy Sabbath, and usually in the house consecrated to the service of the Lord. (3.) Because an important part of Sunday-school work is the education and training of its members in the reverent use of all means of grace. (4.) Because of the power of music either to deepen religious impressions by an appeal to the heart through the emotional nature, or to dispel and efface them by exciting the emotions in another direction. (5.) Because in the words used, a mischievous distortion of the truth, an unwarrantable fancy of the imagination, or an insidious heresy may become more easily and firmly fastened in the mind by rhymes and music than in any other way. (6.) Because this exercise in the Sunday-school ought to constitute a preparation for the more formal worship in the sanctuary. (7.) Because, by the right use of hymns and music, a condition of mind and heart may be induced which will give a devout character to all the other exercises.

Now, in considering some of the methods by which the desired result may best be secured, we must recognize the fact — often lost to the sight of reformers — that no one plan can possibly meet all needs. There are many things to be intelligently considered in each case,— *e. g.*, the classes of people with whom we are to deal; the general degree of musical and literary culture; the character of the material with which we must work; the leadership which may be available, and the instrumental aid we may secure. These are all to be taken into account in fixing upon a definite plan, though the aim should always be toward the highest attainable standard of excellence.

Fully to accomplish the true purpose, there should be, first of all, a clear and generally accepted understanding that these exercises in the Sunday-school shall be recognized as coming legitimately under the head of sacred music. However joyous or even sprightly it may be, this bound must not be passed.

For this reason the character of the book to be used is of vital importance. The hymns should be carefully examined by the pastor or other competent person, to make sure that no "crooked theology" lurks therein to do mischief, and also to see that they are generally of sufficient lyrical merit to be free from a tendency to vitiate the taste. There are multitudes of pleasantly jingling effusions which are flippantly irreverent in expression, especially in the use of the titles applied to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Yet this may be avoided without going entirely to the opposite extreme.

It is well to make frequent use of such of the standard hymns of the church as may be appropriate, and it is a great mistake to suppose that even the children cannot be interested in them if they are not properly introduced. For example, that grandly reverent hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," can be understood by all, and should be found in every collection.

Much that has been said concerning the hymns applies with equal force to the music in which they are to be sung, which should be not only melodious but sufficiently reverent in style to be in keeping with the words used. It should earnestly appeal to the emotional nature, and may be, if the sentiment requires it, bright and cheerful without seeming frivolous. Instrumental aid is well-nigh an absolute necessity, and should be good of its kind. A cheap, wheezy organ or other reed instrument producing a bad quality of tone is harmful, in that it blunts the finer sensibilities, accustoming the ear to that which is uncouth, and preventing the formation of a refined taste. As to the kind of instrument to be used, much depends upon circumstances. A good piano, properly played, gives a stronger leading on account of the percussion touch. But pianos in church lecture-rooms are weekly exposed to extreme changes in temperature, and are very rarely kept in tune, so that quite generally a thoroughly good reed-organ is better. But the miserable things which are widely advertised to be sold at a marvelous sacrifice much below the wholesale rates of a decent article, and in which there is an attempt to make up the musical deficiency by immensity of case and tawdry ornaments, are always a delusion and a snare, "and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

It is most economical to purchase an instrument of established repute, at a fair price, from a reliable dealer who will be responsible for its excellence. If a reed-organ, it should have a strong tone, a "manual sub-bass" and "harmonic" or "octave coupler," because most of the school will sing the melody, and the accompanying harmony must be mainly supplied by the instrument in proportionate strength, thus binding all together and intensifying the effect.

The player should know just how to do this in the best manner which the resources of the instrument will permit. The feeble, sickly, sentimental style adopted by many is wholly inefficient and painfully ridiculous.

The leader should be a Christian, if one is available who has a fair degree of musical fitness for the work. Certainly no one should hold that position who has not a good moral character and at least some sympathy with religious work and worship. It is, of course, eminently desirable that the leader have some theoretical and practical knowledge of music, a correct taste, a sense of the fitness of things, a good leading voice, and a personal magnetism which will enable one to hold a multitude under control without much demonstration by bodily action, depending much upon heart-power. The object should be, not to display self or a fine voice, but to make the service as impressive as possible.

As a general rule, the entire school should be required to sing, though now and then there will be found good reasons for making exceptions. An occasional solo or semi-chorus is very effective, if well done, especially if the full chorus respond in a "refrain," or in alternate stanzas or parts thereof. But we do not approve the plan of assigning a large part of the service to a "Sunday-school choir," for it tends to foster more or less of vanity among those who are thus selected, and to beget indifference on the part of those not thus recognized.

It adds greatly to the interest if the singing is frequently made responsive between some class or section and the entire school.

The introduction of chanting will also be found very profitable, particularly if made "antiphonal," or responsive.

An old maxim, slightly varied, is a good motto to be kept before all who have to do with sacred song: "Whatever is worth singing at all is worth singing well." Let pains be taken to bring out the different parts, alto, tenor, and bass. When there can be an occasional week-day hour of training (which is very desirable), there will be no need, with a competent leader, of consuming the time allotted to Sabbath exercises in "practicing" new pieces.

We have thus endeavored briefly to present the more salient points of the subject, leaving much unsaid which deserves attention. With a clear understanding in every mind of the religious spirit which ought to characterize all the exercises of public worship, a general and cordial recognition of its importance, and an earnest participation by all, there need be no lack of uplifting power and spiritual profit in this delightful portion of "the service of song in the house of the Lord."

IX

WORSHIP

I

THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD'S HOUSE

THE public religious services of the early Hebrews were various forms of worship. Their sacrifices and their offerings, as well as their prayers and their songs, were all of the nature of worship. Before the captivity the exercises connected with the tabernacle or the temple included nothing in the way of preaching. Even the reading of the law seems to have formed no part of public worship at the beginning; in the days of Jehoshaphat we find that the priests took the law with them in their journeys through the land and read it, and explained it to the people; and after the time of Ezra the public reading and exposition of the Pentateuch was constantly practiced; so that when the synagogues arose, this didactic feature was firmly ingrafted upon the Jewish ritual.

But the essential character of the Israelitish cult was worship rather than instruction; the teaching, in the earlier days, was chiefly done at home; the people met at the tabernacle and the temple to worship God. The acts of adoration, of thanksgiving, of confession, of supplication, of intercession, which constitute worship, were performed by them, unitedly, before their altars; the sprinkled blood, the smoking sacrifice, the rising incense, were the symbols by which their faith was assisted, and with which were mingled holy psalm and solemn prayer.

In the minds of a crude and semi-civilized people this worship would, no doubt, often take on grotesque forms and repulsive rites: there would be much of abjectness and terror in its expressions. But the misdirection of the impulse does not vitiate the impulse; the instinct which bids men adore and pray is part of their nature, the noblest part; and the fact that this instinct was so healthily developed among the Hebrews will go far to account for the marvelous vigor which they have always exhibited as a people. A sincere worship is the condition of all highest life.

The religious life of our non-liturgical Protestant churches is somewhat lacking in this element. Our church services do not put upon worship the emphasis that was placed upon it by the Hebrews, nor by the early Christians; they do not grant it the place that properly belongs to it. We do worship in our Christian assemblies, but not much; the central purpose of our assembling is something else besides worship. At best it is instruction; at worst it is amusement: it is hardly ever chiefly, or even largely, worship. Is it not so? Let every habitual attendant upon such services examine himself. In what does your interest center, if you have any interest in the public services of religion? Is it not in the sermon, or the musical performance by the choir? The sermon, perhaps, instructs you, possibly rouses and stimulates you; the singing pleases you; but in all this you are passive and receptive; there is in this no element of worship. Perhaps you listen to the prayer, perhaps you join in it; perhaps you sing the congregational hymns, and enjoy the singing, and are moved and lifted by it. This is worship, indeed; and there are devout souls in all our congregations who take part in it, and find in it solace and strength. Our public services are not destitute of worship; there are moments in which many of us lift our hearts to God in song and prayer. There are reverent forms of worship, too; forms which a sincere devotion often fills with life. What I am saying is, that in most of our non-liturgical churches there is less opportunity for this than there ought to be, and less desire for it; that while we give it some place in our services, we do not give it the place that belongs to it; that it is with most of us an inferior and uninteresting part of the service; and with many of us a perfunctory and tasteless formality, to be gotten through with as speedily as may be.

All the common phrases with which the most religious among us often describe our public services imply that worship is no integral part of them. The people in the church on the Lord's day are often called an "audience." "How large was your audience?" "I saw him in the audience." "The audience slowly dispersed after the benediction." What is an audience? It is a number of persons gathered to listen, to be pleased or instructed. The people who attend a concert or a lecture are properly called an audience; but the people who are found at church on a Sunday morning ought to be something more. They are not there simply to listen; they are there to worship also. And the word which fixes attention upon the part of the service in which the congregation is passive and ignores the rest of it — which exalts the intellectual at the expense of the devotional element—is a very unfortunate word. Call the people gathered in the church a congregation; never call them an audience. Congregation means simply an assemblage of people; it does not prejudge the matter by assuming that they come together to listen; it leaves room for the idea of worship. The same notion finds utterance in other phrases. "I am going some Sunday to hear your minister, or to hear your choir;" — as if the hearing were the only thing for which people visit the house of God. There are many expressions of the same nature, in which it is implied that the minister or the choir does everything that is done in the house of God; that the people are simply there to look on and to listen,— to see how it is done; to censure or to praise the performance; to be taught, perhaps; certainly to be entertained. The idea that the people in the pews are active participants in these services; that their profiting depends on themselves; that in a great and essential part of the service the minister and the choir are only the leaders, and that their ministrations are vain unless the people join with them and follow them, entering into the songs and the prayers unitedly and heartily and devoutly,— this idea has as yet gained but a feeble hold of the minds of the people in many of our churches.

It is this misconception that gives color to the excuses made for the absence of children from the services of the church. "They cannot understand the sermon," it is said. This pleading has much less weight than is sometimes granted to it. Children — even young children — are certainly able to understand a large part of the preaching that is heard in our churches. The force of some of the reasoning they would not comprehend, of course; but there are few sermons preached nowadays which do not contain a great deal of truth that is intelligible to young children. I know that I have been able to understand a large part of what the preacher said, ever since I was seven or eight years old; and I do not believe that the sermons preached in my boyhood were any more intelligible than those which are preached in our churches to-day, nor that the average boy of the modern congregation is duller-witted or more restless now than I was then. This talk about the incapacity of children to take in the teaching of the church is not seldom a subterfuge. Many of the children who are left at home for this reason think sharply enough about religious subjects; you hear their fathers and mothers often reporting the questions they ask and the comments they make,— questions and comments which show plainly enough that they are able to receive a great deal more instruction of this sort than they ever get. But putting aside this excuse altogether,— admitting its validity, for the sake of the argument,— is there not still good reason why the children should come to church? There would be, surely, if we regarded the church primarily as a place of worship; for, if the children cannot understand the sermon, they are surely old enough to worship God; to bow reverently in his presence; to pray to him; to sing hymns of praise to him. Is it not of some importance that our children should be taught and trained to worship? When are they to receive this training? Is there much danger of their beginning too early? Is there not a good deal of danger that they will not begin until it is too late? The children of many of our Christian families are growing up with fixed habits of church neglect, habits that they are not at all likely to outgrow when they are older. And I am persuaded that part of this neglect, at least, arises from the vicious notion that the church is merely a preaching-place for the minister and a concert-room for the choir; from a failure to recognize worship as an integral part of our Sunday services. To counteract this evil tendency it is essential, in the first place, that we have a place of worship; that we learn to think of it and speak of it as such; that we emphasize this feature of our Sunday services; that we so order these services that this feature of them shall be made more central and more prominent than it now is.

The traditional ritual of our Puritan churches was exceedingly meager in this respect. Puritanism was a reaction from the overgrown ritualism of the Middle Ages; and like all reactions, was, of course, extravagant in its contradictions and denials. In its eagerness to pluck from the church the gauds and gewgaws with which formalism had hidden her spiritual grace, it stripped her even of that which was seemly and becoming. From that reaction we are beginning to return. There is a little danger in some quarters that our revolt from Puritanism will be excessive; and there is need that we should keep our heads cool and advance in this direction cautiously. Nevertheless, we may well advance; and the proposition of Professor Hopkins at the Hartford meeting of the Congress of Churches, that we must learn "to emphasize the devotional part of the service, [and] to interest the people in it by making them active sharers in it and not a mere dumb audience," most clearly expresses one of the evident needs of many of our churches.

As a matter of history, this change will be only a return to an earlier usage. The Roman Catholic church, indeed, gives the people almost no part at all in the worship; it is all transacted for them by the priest and the choir. In this respect the Roman Catholics and the old Puritans are very much alike. They are unlike in the number of their forms and rites and ceremonies; they are quite agreed in making the people merely spectators and auditors. The earlier Protestants rebelled against this. Luther and Calvin both prepared forms of worship in which the people should take part. "There was," says Professor Hopkins, "the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, always to be recited aloud by the people. There was the general confession which every one joined in repeating, making it his own personal confession of sin. There was the reading of the Decalogue, to which the people responded, 'Lord have mercy on us and incline our hearts to keep his law.' There was the responsive reading of the Psalter, an exercise to which it might seem that the most exaggerated Puritanism could make no objection. All these features appear in the Strassburg Liturgy of John Calvin, in the Saxon Liturgy, drawn by Luther, in the Liturgy of the Palatinate prepared by Melancthon, and in all the other forms of prayer that were the product of the Reformation period."

That this usage of the first Protestants was like the usage of the first Christians is almost certain. Paul bids the Ephesians "to speak one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," and again in Colossians, "to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." That this is an allusion to responsive worship seems clear also from some of the historical notices of the worship of the early Christians. It is certain that neither the worship of the first Protestants nor that of the first Christians was in any respect like unto that meager, barren, one-man-power ritual introduced by our Puritan ancestors. Upon that, indeed, we have already made a good many innovations. Our ways are altogether unlike their ways, and in many respects the changes are improvements. The early Puritans forbade ministers to solemnize marriages; they would have no religious form in connection with these; the marriage was a secular contract, witnessed by the magistrate. Neither would they allow any prayers to be made at funerals; they feared that such devotions would be interpreted as prayers for the dead; and it was a long time before they would permit the reading of the Bible at all by the minister in the church on Sunday. There was quite as strong an opposition to the introduction of Bibles into the Puritan churches about the middle of the eighteenth century as there was to the introduction of stoves a little later. Both innovations seemed to some of our fathers extremely dangerous. "The reading of the Bible in church!" they exclaimed. "Heaven forbid! Is not this the custom of the Episcopalians? Is not this a relic of Popery? No, we will have none of it." They called it a new departure, or words to that effect; the people who advocated it were regarded as loose and heretical in their tendencies. I dare say they stigmatized the innovation as a grievous instance of letting down the bars. One of the old Puritan divines, the Rev. Stephen Williams, of Longmeadow, records in his diary the first reading of the Scriptures in his congregation, March 30, 1755. But it would seem that there was so much opposition to the measure that it was discontinued for a season. Apparently the people would not listen; they manifested their displeasure by inattention and levity. It was six years before the good pastor was able to resume it. April 12, 1761, he writes in his diary, "I have been preaching about public reading of the Scriptures. I hope people may be convinced of the duty, and that we may attend it with seriousness and reverence." The next Sunday he opens his Bible once more, and from this time onward, apparently, the innovation is allowed without serious protest. It seems passing strange that the Puritans should have feared that the purity of the faith would suffer by having the Bible read publicly in church. It shows us how easy it is for good men to take narrow and fanatical views of religious questions. And it is altogether plain that the Puritan pattern of public worship is not by any means to be servilely followed by us, in our assemblies. It must be that our own judgment is a safer guide than their practice, good and faithful men though they surely were.

What, then, can be done to improve the service of our non-liturgical churches on the devotional side? We need not resort to any radical changes. New forms or ceremonies cannot be wisely thrust into a congregation of worshipers; the way must be prepared for them, and the people must grow into them. This much, at least, is practicable: we can strengthen the things that remain which are of the nature of worship. The congregational hymns, including the Doxology, permit the whole congregation to engage unitedly in an act of worship; we can recognize this as our privilege and can join heartily in the singing, entering as fully as we can into the spirit of the hymn, and making its voices of prayer or praise the utterance of our own feeling — worshiping in the use of it. In the prayers of the service we can also unite, taking a reverent posture of body and mind, and seeking to magnify this part of the service,— to make it more real and profitable to ourselves.

In most of our congregations we might usefully introduce several other acts of congregational worship — the responsive reading of a psalm or some other portion of Scripture, and the repetition together of the Lord's Prayer and of the Apostles' Creed. There will seem to be very little novelty in this; most congregations are quite prepared by responsive reading in the Sunday-school, and by the congregational use of the Lord's Prayer in the same place to join in such exercises. The *Gloria Patri*, at the end of the responsive reading, will also be sung with more and more heartiness. After a little training of this sort it would be possible to introduce a congregational chant, one of the simpler ones, into some part of the service. It is not advisable to lengthen the service, but we may introduce into it a little more variety and give the people a little more chance to participate in it.

One object of making these changes is to make the service more attractive to the children. The Episcopal churches have a great advantage over the non-liturgical churches in this; the more varied and rapidly changing character of the ritual keeps the attention and the interest of the young people, and there are so many parts of the service in which they can join, that they find it, although much longer than ours, less tedious and irksome.

The main result of making the change will be to emphasize the value of worship, to concentrate the attention of the congregation upon this feature of the service; to bring before the minds of all with new clearness the fact that the church is not merely a preaching-place or a concert-room, but a sanctuary where God meets his people to hold communion with them; to listen to their praises and their prayers, to forgive their sins, to comfort their sorrows, to cheer their loneliness, to shed abroad in their hearts his peace, and to clothe them with his might for the conflicts before them. Most true it is that no rites that men can devise can bring to us these gifts of his. He is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. But it is possible by a different ordering of our service to keep before ourselves the great truth of which we are so prone to lose sight, that our main business in the Lord's house is to worship him, to commune with him; that the chief need which we there seek to supply is not the need of diversion nor the need of instruction, but the need of inspiration.

II

HOW MANY SERVICES?

A WISE man has said, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." But however this may have been when Solomon wrote, there are manifestly things in these days never dreamed of by our ancestors. And we must admit that some of the "new things" are fraught with unmistakable benefits to mankind, though there may be disadvantages connected with them, and even dangers which require to be guarded against. Our only reasonable course is candidly to look on all sides of every such proposed change, before pronouncing a judgment for or against it.

The question of a change in the Sunday services hinges mainly on the question whether the minister shall preach twice on the Sabbath or but once.

This point has been a good deal agitated at the present day. It is not strange that the time-honored usage of two preaching services should have acquired such a sacredness with many, that the very thought of abandoning one of them or even changing the character or the time of the second service seems almost like sacrilege, and that some of the very best people, and of the wisest also, most emphatically protest against the innovation. They feel that the movement in this direction tends to destroy the foundations; that it is opening the door for a still wider desecration of the Sabbath than now prevails, and that, on every account, the curtailing of an instrumentality so signally marked with the favor of heaven as has been the preaching of the Word, is earnestly to be deprecated.

Now, if two Sunday sermons are of divine ordination, there is ample reason for this alarm. But is there anything in our Guide Book which intimates this? That preaching is one of the chief human agencies for redeeming the race, is very plain, and that church-going is consequently a sacred duty is equally plain. But the number of services would seem a matter to be decided partly by latitudes and longitudes, and partly by other circumstances. Shall Christians in the temperate regions insist that Christians in the torrid shall have two sermons delivered in the churches every Sabbath, because *they* find such an arrangement convenient and profitable? Or, on the other hand, shall torrid Christians claim that our practice ought to conform to theirs? Is not this rather one of those cases in which the apostle would say, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"?

Those who object to a change refer us to the good old times when the clergyman delivered weekly two sermons, an hour or more long, with comfort to himself and edification to his people. But in any such comparison between the former and latter days, several things are to be taken into the account. Not only were the clerical duties of that earlier time far less multifarious and pressing, but it did not *begin* to be as difficult to meet the wants of hearers. As the clergy were then the great depositaries of religious information, they could hardly fail to secure general attention. And were controversies for the maintenance of truth deemed necessary, the minister was the man and the pulpit the place for them.

There were no anniversaries of benevolent societies, with their picked brilliant orators for the platform; no Young Men's Christian Associations; no lyceum bureaus; no literary, historic, and scientific courses for the people. The minister was their weekly journal, their "Missionary Herald," their full quarterly, and their religious encyclopedia.

Church-going was the great, if not the only, weekly entertainment of the community. They looked to it not simply for the quickening of their hearts, but for the whetting of their intellects. They took home the dry, knotty points discussed in the pulpit as choice nuts to be cracked, eaten, and digested, or otherwise, evening after evening, by their fireside. No wonder that men and women went up to the house of the Lord in the face of untold difficulties. What could they have done without the two Sabbath services?

The children, too, little as they could understand, gladly accompanied their elders to the breezy old meeting-house. It was also their weekly entertainment. And in spite of the constable's rigorous watch that summarily interrupted all their attempts at napping, and cut short the smallest outbreak of childish fun or mischief, they counted it a punishment to be left at home. Knowing what the clergyman was to his flock in those times, that he was, indeed, their very Alpha and Omega, we hardly wonder at their rapt attention to the words that fell from his lips, and at their uncovered heads and their hushed tones in his presence.

But whether for better or for worse, everything is changed. In this period, teeming with religious publications, and with dailies, and weeklies, and bimonthlies, and monthlies, and quarterlies; when the press with its myriad tongues preaches every day; in this telegraphic and telephonic age, when the very air is full of lightning communications, and sermons fly on the wings of the wind, how different is the minister's work! People nowadays will not listen to long, learned discourses such as their fathers and grandfathers delighted in. Dwelling largely on theological dogmas is the surest way to empty the church.

The present is an era of almost preternatural activity. Since the world began, there has never been an epoch when the Sabbath was a boon more needed by mankind,— the Sabbath, in its original idea, as a day, not of religious dissipation, such as some make it, nor of laziness, or self-indulgence, or amusement, such as others make it, but a day of rest in the true Sabbath sense. What we need is to have the swift wheels stopped, the buzz of machinery hushed; to be lifted above all the rush and tumult to a higher plane; to bathe our souls in purer air; to be vitalized and spiritualized.

Now, if the minister would meet such far-reaching wants, his sermons should not be made to order like a piece of mechanism, but should grow, like a thing of life. It must be remembered, however, that growth takes time. If he would give his flock heavenly manna, he must feed on it himself; his whole being must be permeated with divine truth. This truth should make the web of his sermons, with a warp woven out of the experiences of his people as he gathers them in daily intercourse, the whole being touched and deepened by his own personal life.

We may reason as we please about the duty of sitting patiently twice every Sunday through a long-winded and lifeless sermon, but this is reasoning without book. We have got to take men as they are. It is one of the greatest questions of the day — a question that is agitating our secular papers and our literary magazines as well as our religious journals,— the question how to fill our churches, how to arrest the ever-increasing tendency with grown people and children to stay away from the sanctuary. There are, without doubt, many causes conspiring to this result, but may not one of them be found in the fact that they do not get what they want, what they ought to have? This growing propensity to break away from public worship might possibly be arrested, in some cases, at least, by lessening the quantity of the services and improving the quality. To hold his congregation, the minister must put his very best efforts into his sermons,— not to produce fine essays, but to give them food, to meet their needs, to quicken and strengthen and elevate them.

A few years since, an eminent Unitarian writer affirmed in one of our leading journals: "The perfunctory manner and loose thinking common to the pulpit are scarcely tolerable. There is no longer any sarcasm in the use of the term 'pulpit argument' as synonymous with 'unsound reasoning,' and 'pulpit rhetoric' as the designation of 'a feeble and wilted style.'"

A reviewer of this article comments on the distinguished writer: "Let him for a few years be put into the clerical harness, and take charge of a large parish, and meet all the countless claims upon his time and energy which the public now makes upon the ministry; and be required to produce two elaborate review articles for the pulpit twice each week for ten months in the year, and possibly he would learn something which might just a little soften the asperity of his regard for pulpit argument and pulpit rhetoric."

Some one writing on this subject says: "Intelligent men everywhere recognize the inability of ministers, unless wonderfully gifted, to prepare two new sermons of high character every week through a long series of years;" and quotes from John Bright the remark: "Only men of great mind, great knowledge, and great power can do this with success. I wonder that any man can do it."

From several other testimonies given by this writer, two or three are added. Says Blakie: "Even supposing the clergyman has no other work to do but to compose two really good sermons a week, I should say that the composition of two such discourses, with the previous study which they imply, is more than enough for the weekly work."

Whitefield prepared his sermons with much care and then preached them a great many times. Garrick, the tragedian, speaking of Whitefield, said that he did not reach perfection in the delivery of a sermon until he had preached it forty times. Charles Dickens prepared himself for his public readings by the daily effort of months. Contrast this with the hurried writing of a sermon completed late Saturday night and delivered with very brief preparation. Would not greater good be accomplished by devoting more time to the study and the writing of the sermon and repeating it occasionally?

Mr. Gough repeats his lectures frequently in the same community. With less than a score of them, it is said he has appeared hundreds of times in some of our cities.

When Massillon was asked what sermon he called his best, he replied, "The one I know best by heart." Such a sermon requires long meditation and study, not cold mechanical study, but that in which the heart as well as the head is thoroughly enlisted.

Now, however it might be with one who is simply a preacher, it is certainly impracticable for most pastors, with all the other labor devolving on them, to prepare weekly two discourses of this character. With rare exceptions, either the sermons will degenerate or the minister will lose ground physically.

Read Moody's testimony on this point, given at a farewell meeting in Dublin:

> "I have heard it said that ministers have an easy time of it, and that while they preach only two sermons in the week, I am at the work continually. Well, I can say, in answer to such statements, *that I was set-*

tled at one period of my life for two years in one place, and I worked harder when I was then preaching two sermons in the week than I have done since all the time I have been going up and down through the country. Clergymen have many things to do in addition to preaching. They have their people to look after, and they have the sick to visit. I would rather preach five sermons than go to the house of mourning. It takes more sympathy and strength from me than preaching. Then a minister has to make calls, receive visitors, and be social; and after all that, he has to prepare his sermons. But it has been said preparing two sermons is easy work. If you think so, just try it, and see how you will get on. If you think your minister has an easy time of it, try his work, and see how long you will continue at it. Ministers are the only people, I might say, who don't get rest. I remember when, during a period of some five years, I tried often to get rest, and I never knew what it was. There were cases of sickness, there were funerals, and there was always something turning up to occupy the whole of my time."

From a record of his own experience, a young pastor computed during the year as many as forty special occasions outside the parish — to say nothing of those within — at which he was expected to be present, making as an average about one a week through the working months. Now, is it strange that with such never-ending demands ministers are often literally unable to give anything but hasty, if not crude efforts? Might they not materially covet Mr. Hale's "Double," even at the risk of his proving their "undoing"?

Sooner or later we shall be likely to find that in the present condition of things few ministers are able, year in and year out, adequately to prepare two sermons a week; and that from persistence in the attempt may come a loss in physical vigor, or in the character of the sermons, or perhaps in both.

It is objected that if, as proposed, you put into one sermon the labor of two, no relief is gained. The relief comes in part in the liberty, under this arrangement, to concentrate the forces on one effort, thus securing the great satisfaction of doing better work. You can get more cream, as has been suggested, from setting your milk in one deep rather than in two shallow pans. If the fewer sermons can be made more effective, greater good will be accomplished by them than by double the number of those more hastily prepared. Quality and not quantity is the thing to be aimed at. Were it the latter, then we ought to value books,— not according to their intrinsic worth, but according to the number of pages they contain.

It is argued that from the greater facilities for a thorough training in the various departments of sacred literature, modern clergymen should produce two weekly sermons with more ease than their less-favored predecessors. But the question does not depend on ministerial education or intellectual ability. It is from the pressure of work unknown in former times — from the necessity of living continually in a rarefied atmosphere, an atmosphere surcharged with electricity and involving a far greater expenditure of nervous force — that the change is advocated.

It is a significant fact that in very many of those churches which still keep up two preaching services the attendance in one part of the day is so small as to be disheartening to the pastor. And even of the few who are always present, some of them, from their own admission, go from a sense of duty rather than from choice.

Most of us can recall instances of disappointment at the comparatively small results from the preaching of some young man of talents, acquisitions, and earnest piety; of disappointment, too, that the man had not grown as we expected and predicted, and that his sermons, instead of gaining in strength and matter and finish, have retrograded. Yet he may not have a drop of lazy blood in his veins, and every moment may have been filled with work. He has simply mortgaged his strength, and the day of reckoning has begun to cast its shadow in advance.

This perpetual pressure is, without doubt, one of the causes of the short pastorates now so common. Great as may be a minister's attachment to his people, the temptation to accept a call to another parish where he can avail himself of former labors is sometimes very urgent.

Exceptional cases may be named — Henry Ward Beecher, for one. To say nothing of his robust constitution, his untroubled nerves, and his ability to sleep under all circumstances,—which latter is the surest protection against breaking down,—he abounded in vitality and spontaneity and magnetism. Moreover, he assumed little pastoral charge of his people, and always took an unusually long vacation.

This question has a relation to the people hardly less than to the minister. There are intelligent Christians who feel that for them one sermon, properly digested, is more profitable than two. Willing as they may be in spirit, the flesh is often weak, and they grow weary in hearing, as does the minister in preaching. This, again, adds to his burdens, for at the evening prayer-meeting, where they ought to come fresh and full of vitality, allowing him rest and refreshment while they manage the oars, he finds them so weary from the tension of mind in which they have been kept all day, that they often have nothing to give; and exhausted as the pastor may be, the nerve-force of the meeting must be supplied by him, and at an expenditure of strength of which they have no conception.

As to the tendency of the change toward Sabbath desecration, it is scarcely to be credited that those who are in the habit of attendance at a second preaching service would consider themselves justified simply because this service is dispensed with, in joining the crowd of Sabbath-breakers, especially when the time might be so pleasantly and profitably spent in the family circle. In the pressure of the various Sunday services, home life has unquestionably suffered, and that is a loss for which, from its far-reaching influence, nothing can compensate. If there is still surplus time and strength, let the hearers themselves, in their way, become preachers, going out into the highways and hedges, that they may win some wayfarer to Christ.

"The Congregationalist," which made inquiries of New England ministers who had tried the one-sermon plan, received and published some forty answers, all of them speaking favorably of the results of the change. There was, of course, a variety of arrangements, according to the circumstances of the parish, some preferring to have the Sunday-school in connection with the preaching service, and others to take the afternoon for it under the name of a Bible service, bringing in, so far as possible, the whole congregation. A few quotations will give the drift of this "Congregationalist" broadside:

"For years our people have borne the burden of a preaching service at half-past ten, a Sunday-school at one, another sermon at half-past two, and a prayer-meeting at seven. Some bear the marks of the struggle now, and will probably, like Jacob, go lame therefrom to the end of their pilgrimage. These are some of the results of the change:

"A large increase in the attendance of the Sabbath-school.

"The effect upon our service in the sanctuary is healthful, and the people are more wide-awake and fresh to worship and listen.

"They enjoy the preaching more than under the crowded plan. Many think the sermons are better.

"It allows the pastor to concentrate all the energies of his working hours from Tuesday morning until Saturday night upon one theme, preventing him from spreading himself out so thin as two sermons would require him to do.

"It conduces to unity of impression upon the people. Especially if the subject of the evening meeting bears upon the theme of the morning discourse, the people each Sabbath carry away some definite impression of some one truth.

"It gives people some part of the Sabbath to spend with their families. Those who are inclined to break the Sabbath are seldom, if ever, found at the afternoon service.

"It carries many of the adult members of the congregation into the Sabbath-school, and brings the people out in force to the evening prayer-meeting."

"The advantages are: Time for family intercourse and home instruction, opportunity for some to labor in other places, definiteness and concentration of impression, real profit from the service, and freshness for the prayer-meeting."

"Universal satisfaction; a large, attentive audience in the morning; a church interest in the Sunday-school; a pastor's Bible class; a fully attended prayer-meeting, and, withal, an opportunity to obey the divine injunction: 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of rest.'"

"It seems to give just about the normal amount of work which a man can do well, and not break down. Nothing could induce us to return to the old plan."

"Rest and home life for business men, and vigorous mission-work in the afternoon, and an interesting prayer-meeting, reaching many unaccustomed to attend through the week."

"Pastor and people are both benefited by the change."

"It is the quality of the preaching and hearing, and not the quantity, which Protestants, who do not go by count of beads, or anything else, ought to consider."

"Experience shows that Sabbath-breakers are not the ones whom an afternoon sermon will commonly draw."

"Better sermons; better attendance upon all the religious exercises; more time for parental instruction at home."

"Opportunity for reading, instruction, and mutual acquaintance in the home-circle, greater numbers at the prayer-meeting, and better sermons."

"A better sermon, a stronger minister physically and spiritually, a more successful Sunday-school, and a live prayer-meeting."

"A better chance for the culture of home life."

"The following has been the practice of one church for seven years: Morning worship with sermon; evening worship; first Sunday in the month, church-work concert; second, Sabbath-school concert; third, preaching service; fourth, praise-meeting. The needs of the people should determine in each church."

The second preaching service, in a good number of churches, comes in the evening, which is a less burdensome arrangement than that which has generally prevailed, at least in New England. Still the arguments, for both pastor and people, in favor of but one sermon under some circumstances remain unchanged. The programme for Sunday evening, last named, is very attractive. There is a manifest advantage in having the monthly or church-work concert at a time when the largest attendance can be obtained. By putting the various fields, both home and foreign, in charge of particular persons, for monthly report, a live as well as instructive meeting may be secured. It is no less desirable to have a Sabbath-school concert, which shall interest the old as well as the young. A union preaching service, if it can be had, is a pleasant and profitable arrangement, but if not, the preparation of a monthly would be very different from that of a weekly additional sermon. A praise-meeting, in which the whole congregation, so far as possible, shall take part, is a fitting close for the month. When there is a fifth Sabbath, a prayer-meeting might occupy the evening, and could also be easily substituted for any of the others.

A successful pastor writes: "My *best* ideal of Sunday is a full morning service, with Sunday-school, all together three hours long, and the rest of the day devoted to household life. My *next* ideal is a morning service in which the sermon is sharply a treatment of some Christian theme, and an evening service in which some of the application of Christianity to society are considered by the preacher,— temperance, missions, social reforms, sanitary arrangements. I favor this because I think Christianity is to be made more ethical, and brought closer to the progress of society."

Such sermons would cost great labor, but by uniting with other churches this difficulty would be lessened, and larger congregations secured.

It will be seen that among the advantages of the one-sermon plan made prominent in this argument, as well as in the preceding summary, is that of gaining opportunity for family intercourse for which under the other system there is literally no time. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of thus bringing parents and children and brothers and sisters into closer social and spiritual relations.

Some ministers who have made this change, and who are men of ability and devotion to their work, express themselves unequivocally as to the relief they have experienced, affirming that now for the first time they know the great joy of preparing sermons and of preaching them. This must do much toward reconciling those of the flock who miss their accustomed second portion. If they have allowed their pastor to drag on heavily, overworked, and therefore often dispirited, it has been ignorantly and not from indifference. They will, doubtless, learn to be well content with one Sunday "feast of fat things."

It would be a grievous injustice to infer that those who favor the one-sermon arrangement are indolent, inefficient men, lacking in true devotion to their work. If there are drones in the pulpit, as doubtless there are, by all means drive them out of the ministerial hive. It is the very last place for them. But while a few may favor the change from unworthy motives, the most who do so are faithful, consecrated, useful ministers.

It would, also, be unjust to pastor and people to claim that the proposal comes from a lower estimate than formerly of the value of preaching.

No one will deny that this is the great work of the minister. To argue from this, however, that they who deliver only one sermon on the Sabbath are thereby underrating the preaching service, would hardly be Christian charity.

But it should be repeated that latitudes and longitudes have much to do with the question. When the congregations in the two services are different, as is frequently the case at the West, especially in localities where the Germans are a large element in the population, the duty of maintaining two preaching services may be unquestionable. In such cases this double preaching is less burdensome. A young pastor, settled in one of our New England towns, found himself, after a year or two, so worn by the pressure of the two sermons that he resigned his charge. He stated to the council which dismissed him that when he found himself, week after week, obliged to prepare a second sermon to preach, to the same people who had heard him in the morning, many of whom he had reason to know came out the second time from a sheer sense of duty in order to keep up the accustomed service, the preparation and delivery of this sermon became more and more a burden and a weariness, till he could bear it no longer. His next parish was in a Western town, where the evening congregation was entirely different from that in the morning, requiring a totally different kind of sermon. Under the altered circumstances, he maintained two preaching services with comparative ease.

It is fully believed by many conscientious and laborious clergymen that the proposed change would make their ministry more effective. This has already been the result with most of those who have tried the plan, and who are emphatic in their conviction of the good it has brought to their churches. And in conservative Massachusetts, of the five hundred and twenty-three Congregational churches, four hundred and fifty have come into this arrangement.

Certain difficulties and drawbacks are experienced, such as are incidental to every change; but if the result justifies the experience, it cannot be doubted that there will be some satisfactory adjustment of all such difficulties.

III

THE SERVICE OF SONG

MR. MOODY is in the habit of firing into the choir galleries a few Parthian shots, not all of which are well aimed. "Quartette choirs" are his abomination, and he does not scruple to denounce them as inventions of the devil. Yet on the day when I heard Mr. Moody deliver this philippic, he had a quartette on his own platform, and frequently during his meetings portions of the hymns were sung by a quartette or a semi-chorus. A quartette choir that is not supported by a chorus, and that monopolizes all the music of the church, leading the congregation, if the congregation is ever requested to sing, in such a freaky and fractious way that nobody can sing — such a quartette is indeed a nuisance. A small ring of musicians like this is sometimes allowed to take possession of the gallery, and to spread itself over a considerable portion of the Sunday service. The singing is simply a performance; there is no worship in it, nor any thought of worship; it is simply art; and it pleases those people to whom church-going is a decent diversion, and religion a polite observance. It will generally be found true (though there are occasional exceptions) that a quartette choir will sing the lightest and most florid music. Church music of the best quality a quartette cannot sing. True church music is choral music; it calls for large volumes and broad effects, and you can no more fitly render it with a quartette than you can reproduce Niagara with four buckets of water. A hymn-tune like "Duke Street," or "Pleyel's Hymn," or "St. Ann's"; an anthem like "He Watching Over Israel," from "Elijah," or "The Lord is Good," from "Eli," when sung by a quartette, are quite too thin. And, since quartettes cannot sing music of this kind, they are likely to resort to brilliant and showy pieces, in which their execution can be best displayed.

Moreover, the congregation will not sing with a quartette. Here, again, there are some exceptions; but this is the rule.

The quartette can never lead a congregation very well if it would, and generally it would not if it could. The ideas about music which are likely to prevail in the gallery where the quartette reigns alone, are ideas which do not harmonize with congregational singing.

To resign the church music into the hands of a quartette is, therefore, to depreciate it, and often to make it an abomination. But the quartette has its place, nevertheless, in public worship, and when it is kept in its place it is a good thing. The true church choir is a large chorus, in which there should be four singers, each capable of singing alone, and all trained to sing together. Such a choir can render the best church music acceptably, and can also successfully lead a congregation.

Two objects are to be sought in church music — religious impression and religious expression. It is a crude notion that no music is legitimate in church except that in which the whole congregation may join. The congregation may be benefited by listening as well as by singing. But those who listen find emotions stirring within them which it will do them good to express for themselves; and therefore the congregation ought to have an opportunity to pour out its voice in a grand choral song. And when the congregation is called on to sing, the value of the chorus as a leader is felt. The congregation will sing with a chorus to lead; and, led by such a force of steadily marching melody, it is quite impossible that there should be any dragging, or that the discords should make themselves prominent.

The great meetings of the evangelists show us the value of these methods of praise. The solos of Mr. Sankey are often impressive; who will cavil at this method of conveying truth or awakening emotion? The choruses of the great choir are often still more impressive; no person who watches a congregation listening to spirited and triumphant sacred song from a large body of trained singers will doubt the value of such a service as a means of religious impression. And yet for the proper rendering of these choruses it is better that portions of them be sung by a single voice, or by two or three or four trained voices. A phrase or a stanza may often be well delivered in this manner, heightening the effect of the music, and fixing attention still more strongly upon the words of the song. Then, when the great congregation, moved by the singing to which it has listened, and the other services in which it has engaged, is called to "stand up and bless the Lord" in some simple and familiar hymn, its response is a burst of praise, in which the angels might well wish to join.

Whatever, therefore, Mr. Moody's theories of church music may be, his meetings show us the value of solo singing, of quartette singing, of chorus singing, and of congregational singing; and make plain to us that we can afford to dispense with none of these methods of praise in our churches.

IV

THE ORGANIST

THE management of the music is perhaps the most intricate and the most backward of all ordinary parish problems. Its somewhat notorious character as a problem arises both from its nature and from long-standing errors of theory and practice. Its inherent dangers will never be successfully avoided without an attempt to treat it radically, systematically, and in downright earnest. Isolated improvements and reforms, undirected by a consistent general theory, are of but ambiguous utility,— useful when successful enough to quicken a common-sense view of the whole subject, but harmful when so weak as to arouse ridicule or so superficial as not to uncover any important principle.

The average mind dislikes "general principles." Abstract statements are regarded as dry and barren. Theories pass current only at much less than their face value. There are two ways to realize even the best theories. One way is to provide an actual sample of the working of the theory, so pertinent, so extensive, so attractive, that public attention shall be captured by surprise, without a chance either to fight or to run away. The other way is to make up the theory into a man, infolding the bare skeleton of speculation with the warm energy of a personality. Both methods may be used in advancing a right theory of church music. There are some notable examples of such a theory in its true dignity and power. But unfortunately these rare specimens cannot be brought to the notice of many different people, and thus be made to serve as great object-lessons. The guidance and force of *personal leaders* and teachers are needed to create a multitude of such examples, and gradually to make them the rule rather than the exception. That is, in addition to our ministers, with whatever knowledge of music and of music in worship they may have received in their seminary preparation, a special class of professional musicians is needed, trained not only in the technics of music but also in the whole subject of music as a phase of church life. This latter method is the only one naturally fitted to win extensive success. Nothing in church work can succeed without the application of personal power; and in the matter of the music such power must emanate primarily, of course, from the minister, but secondarily and specially, from the organist. Accordingly we devote ourselves to a study of the qualifications that should be sought by congregations in their organists or musical leaders.

First. Not the least of an organist's qualifications is some genuine knowledge of music. This is self-evident. Yet the precise kind of knowledge required is a proper theme for discussion. A player whose taste is limited to the rub-a-dub-dub class of music, to the thousand and one marches and waltzes of the cheap-music catalogue, is plainly unprepared to supply in church worship the solemn ministries of the nobler forms of song and instrumental composition. Even a player who dotes upon the sentimental melody of the average "Idylle," or the smooth neatness of the average "Andante," is hardly stalwart enough in taste to appreciate a sterling English anthem or a massive organ prelude. A taste for opera, even for opera of the higher grade, is but a doubtful basis for leadership in church music, since the fine points of the operatic style are quite unlike those of the true church style.

An aptitude for some standard type of non-dramatic music, as for classical piano-writing, for choral works, or for symphonic music, is far more promising, because it implies a true artistic taste, a taste that has outgrown the craving for mere jingle, mere mellifluousness, or mere passion. A manager of church music should feel in his soul the great gulf between the music that only tickles the ear and that which touches the heart, or utters its emotions; and he should be ready to insist, with the force of an independent conviction, that the former class, however suitable to the social gathering or to the concert-room, is worse than useless in the church. He should be alive to the more intellectual qualities of music, that is, to constructive strength and ingenuity, to that balance and contrast of parts which constitutes "form," and to the more recondite fitting of musical material to the expression and illumination of thought. A musician who overlooks the beauty of "thematic" composition is necessarily cut off from most of the higher and more religious species of music. Particularly should the leader of church music be a student of the historic development of church music. Whether he may perform them or not, he should constantly refresh and enlarge his taste by diligently studying the standard oratorios and masses, the works of the leading German motettists and English anthem-writers, together with those of the less sensational composers for the organ. In short, not only should the professional church musician aim to be a musician in the best use of that term, but to be a specialist among musicians, cultivating a peculiar field and always recognizing the limits that separate that field from all others.

Second. Some skill as an executant is important in an organist. He should play well enough to command the respect of his singers and hearers. He should not blunder so as to make his music unintelligible. He should not be so tied to one or two hobbies as to become tiresome. He must be earnest enough to be always growing in power, and bright enough to adapt himself to circumstances and occasions. He should be able to play moderately difficult preludes, to accompany with taste and accuracy a plain choral anthem or an ordinary air, and to supply an adequate support and guidance for congregational singing. He needs experience in playing at sight, an accomplishment that depends largely upon practice. He needs to know the rudiments of harmony, of the manipulation of organ-stops, and of voice-training. He does not need, though he may sometimes profitably use, a decided dexterity of finger and of foot, since mere virtuosity is uncalled for in church services. He should understand enough of the mechanism of the organ, whether pipe or reed, to correct chance displacements, to repair small breakages, and to do some tuning.

Third. The organist is usually also choir-master. If so, he should have the personal qualities to insure his easy supremacy among his singers. He should be a gentleman, considerate, courteous, pleasant-spoken. He should be old and wise enough to command respect and encourage confidence. He should be tactful in handling immature and thoughtless and even disagreeable people, so as to elicit good work even from unpromising material. He should have firmness at least of outward demeanor. He needs the smaller virtues of promptness and business precision, so that his rehearsals may begin and proceed energetically. He particularly needs the art, or the grace, of giving corrections and rebukes so as not to cause mortification or resentment.

In cases where the organist is not the chorister, the foregoing remarks should be transferred to the latter. Whether it be wise to have both a leader and a player depends upon circumstances. It is, of course, hard to find all desirable traits united in a single person. Yet, probably in most cases the organist should be chorister also, but with a large chorus choir a division of labor is often unavoidable. But the responsibility should always be vested in one person only. If there be a separate chorister, the organist usually should rank as his assistant.

Women are apt to be deficient in the executive and dictatorial qualities that belong to the ideal choir-leader. In all other respects they are at least as well fitted as men for the office of church organist. Indeed, the higher traits of church musician are rather more common among women than among men.

Fourth. We come now to those qualifications of an organist that are, perhaps, less obvious, and yet that have most to do with his success as a church official. We refer to the intellectual and moral principles that should control his work. Of these the most fundamental is that church music, in all its forms, is a means and not an end, an accessory to the purposes of public worship, an attendant or acolyte. Its subservient and subsidiary position is too often overlooked, even by earnest and sagacious people. Yet its true position must be recognized by those who are to manage it, if they are not to make ridiculous and obnoxious uses of it. There is a radical distinction between a concert musician and a church musician,—the one labors to give pleasure to his audience, and thus to secure professional honor to himself; the other labors either to guide the mood of a worshiping congregation, or to assist in the expression of that mood. In church music the delight of the hearer and the *éclat* of the performer are not only of small moment, but they are actually obstructive considerations.

A distinguished pastor tersely says that the objects of Protestant church worship are "expression, instruction, and inspiration." Expression is secured through all congregational exercises, and through the vicarious services of minister, choir, and organist. Instruction is afforded by the Scripture lessons and the sermon. Inspiration flows from the mere assemblage of many worshipers, from the solemnizing impressions of the church edifice, from the organ music, from certain kinds of choir-singing, from the heartiness of united exercises, and from the influence of the minister's personality. Now, if this be a fair statement of the true purposes of public worship, it follows that all forms of church music should conduce to these and these only; and the church organist should devote himself wholly to them. If he be a music-teacher, sorely in need of advertisement, he should yet be manly enough to keep his church work uninfluenced by personal considerations. If he be a growing artist, eager for the beauties of his wonderful art, wrapt up in his progress as a student, he should yet strictly curb his ambitions within the lines laid down by the paramount objects of church worship. This is "a hard saying" to many organists, no doubt, but it is fundamental.

The radical difference between music outside the church and music inside the church is that the one is "art for art's sake," while the other is art applied to the furtherance of Christian worship. The church organist should feel the difference and govern himself accordingly, even at much sacrifice. He will not succeed as a church official unless he be an attentive student of public worship in all its aspects, and unless he watch the phenomena of worship in his own church and adapt himself to special needs and occasions. His official honor should be stirred to make his music contribute distinctly and always to the fervor of the services of which it is a part.

Fifth. This necessitates another step. If the organist is in honor bound to be a student of public worship, and to put his work into vital connection with the prime motives of that worship, he will find himself hopelessly perplexed if he does not himself participate in that worship. It is strange that many churches are utterly indifferent to the spirituality of their musical leaders, when they are solicitous about that of their pastors. Nothing points so clearly as this to the wide-spread misapprehension of the real function of music in worship. The organist or chorister, if he is anything, is a leader or guide in the act of worship. His duties in a religious sense cannot be other than vitally important. Yet, in many places, he is treated with a frivolous thoughtlessness. He is looked upon as an entertainer, a purveyor of luxury, like the upholsterer that cushions the pews. He is called to account as a hireling of the "society," like the sexton. He is perhaps sneered at by the officers of the church as "only a musician." He is rarely expected to act as if charged with any religious responsibility. His religious character is often not even considered. Even his morality may be notoriously bad without apparently disqualifying him. That he should be as devoted to the spiritual interests of the parish as the pastor or the Sunday-school superintendent would in many places be regarded as a fanatically extreme proposition. It is not strange, when churches are so reckless about the religious qualifications of their musical leaders, that they often suffer bitterly for their laxity. There can be no assured success or fitness in the musical elements of social worship unless the person who manages them is in hearty sympathy with the worshiping assembly. Recklessness as to the character of musical leaders is not only dangerous, but wrong. How can worship be acceptable to God that proceeds under the management of a man whose service is perfunctory and heartless?

Sixth. The organist should be the intimate friend of the pastor and his sworn ally in the work of conducting public worship. The one is commander-in-chief, the other *aide-de-camp.* Success can only come through unanimity of action. Even when the organist is inclined to disagree with his superior officer, he is still bound, by a kind of military discipline, to execute orders to the best of his ability. He may remonstrate if he pleases, but it is treason for him to falter or disobey. But, wherever it is at all possible, the relation between the pastor and the organist should be one of mutual respect and regard. They should magnify their common aims and methods; they should support each other in critical undertakings; they should confer together about improvements and reforms. The pastor should find in the organist an assistant, and the congregation should accept the fact; according to the latter a measure of the deference they give the former.

Seventh. This leads us to add that the organist should be actively interested in the life and *personnel* of the congregation he serves. He should know the majority of the people, so as to secure their personal attachment and loyalty; he should watch the development of musical taste and ability in the parish; he should have relations of official intercourse with young and old, with rich and poor, with musical and unmusical, so that his work may receive cordial support and be wisely adapted to actual conditions. Yet he should be independent, not the creature of some prominent man or woman. Through his work in the church he should acquire a place of honor in the community at large.

Eighth. The selection of an organist should be jointly undertaken by the church and the society, exactly as is the selection of a pastor. In both cases, since the offices are both of spiritual importance, the church or session should nominate and the society coöperate by fixing business details. If care were exercised in this selection, there would naturally be more permanence in the organist's tenure of office than now. Nothing does more to demoralize the church music profession than the expectation of annual removals. It checks laudable ambitions, and plants a fearful crop of ignoble ones. It is hard to say whether it reacts more harmfully upon the churches or upon the musicians.

Supposing that a reasonable attention has been paid to these qualifications of an organist, what is due from the congregation to their chosen musical leader? In the first place, he has the right to a fair salary. The minister is paid for three distinct kinds of work — preaching, pastoral care, and conducting public worship. The organist is his special assistant in discharging the latter function, and should be paid accordingly. If the duties of the organist were not necessarily so varied in different churches, it might be possible to name some suitable ratio between the pastor's and the organist's salaries. Where the latter officiates at all the regular services of the church, including the Sunday-school and the prayer-meetings, where he conducts parish singing-classes and choir rehearsals, his salary may be perhaps one-sixth that of the pastor. But where he is unwilling or unable to fulfill all these duties, it should be proportionately less. A church that treats its whole musical service as an insignificant part of its church activity may be excused for paying for it insignificantly. Yet it may be queried whether any trained or efficient organist should be offered less than one-fifteenth of the pastor's salary. Only an untrained leader, whose service is obviously a make-shift, should be offered the pittance occasionally thought sufficient. Of course this statement does not at all relate to those cases in which for any reason the organist offers his work wholly or in part as a gratuitous contribution. Whatever the salary fixed, let it be paid regularly. It should not be paid indirectly by gifts, by the promise of private pupils, or by the uncertain proceeds of concerts, any more than the minister's salary should be made up by donation-parties or irregular perquisites.

The organist, if he be a fairly competent player, should have absolute control of the use of the organ. It is as discourteous for a society's committee to allow promiscuous playing upon the organ as to allow promiscuous occupancy of the pulpit. But, on the other hand, the organist should not permit regular practice upon the organ without careful supervision and without the consent of the society's committee.

The organist, if he be worthy of his high calling, deserves the cordial assistance of the people in all his experiments and enterprises. To help him by personal service, by indirect coöperation, by sympathy and appreciation, is to display a loyalty to the church whose officer he is. Such support is not merely a personal courtesy, but a distinct method of improving the ideals of the musical work, and thus it brings its own immediate and rich reward.

The above study of the duties, rights, and needs of the church organist is not offered without due consideration of the difficulties of the matter. We have drawn an ideal sketch. To realize all the foregoing ideals at once may seem so impossible that the suggestion of them is almost ridiculous. Yet each of these details has been shown to be practicable by actual experience. The circumstances of each parish must determine what is there feasible. In many country towns, for instance, the choice of an organist is limited to one person, who may not be really well fitted for the work. The number of thoroughly desirable church organists anywhere is painfully small. In the country there is a lack of skill and breadth, in the city a worse lack of spirituality. The case, after all, is not so very uneven between the large and the small parishes, for the apparent advantage of the former is too often an unessential advantage. Even the most humble, untaught player in a struggling hill-town may fulfill with distinction all the higher duties of his office, serving with noble fidelity and singleness of heart the spiritual interests of which he is the custodian. The more famous artist of some metropolitan church, with all his opportunities and resources, is sadly in danger of wholly misinterpreting his calling, and thus of making it a gigantic religious nuisance, insidious in power and utterly hurtful in effect.

There is little hope of the future upbuilding of a true form of church music anywhere without the enforcement of the highest ideals upon those who are charged with its management. May the time soon come when to be a church organist implies in part the same responsibility and the same honor as to be a church pastor!

V

INSTRUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

THE battle over the propriety of using instrumental music in Christian worship is still raging in a very limited area. The argument in favor of instruments has the support, of course, of ancient Hebrew usage, for not only were instruments used in the Temple, but they are distinguished as "made to give thanks unto the Lord," and as "the instruments of God." The titles of several of the Psalms give direction about the instrumental accompaniment that was to be used, "neginoth" meaning "with stringed instruments," and "nehiloth," "with flutes." The mysterious word "selah" is thought by good authority to be the sign for an instrumental interlude, or at least for a burst of instrumental sound. This use of instruments, harps, psalteries, pipes, and timbrels persisted throughout the history of Israel in the Temple and to some extent in the synagogues, as well as in private life. In early Christian times, it is true, the use of instruments was for a time discountenanced merely because all instruments known at the time were closely associated with the immoralities of heathenism. From about 400 A. D., however, they began to re-appear. In the seventh century the organ in some rudimentary form was established as *the* church instrument by Pope Vitalian. Other instruments have been used freely in sacred services, though the full orchestra has rarely appeared except in connection with the spectacular ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. In America there has been a curious inversion of the historical order in Europe: instead of organ first and orchestral instruments afterward, here it was flute and bass viol first and organ afterward, as a late and (to some minds) dangerous innovation.

THE ORGAN. The origin of this majestic instrument was in the pastoral pipe and the courtly flute, but its development has been almost wholly due to the demands of the worship of God. A history of more than a thousand years of constant use in monastery, chapel, and cathedral entitles it to the veneration of the Christian world; while the splendor of the sacred compositions that it has called forth and the offices of consolation and uplifting that it has rendered should elicit a loving gratitude. When one climbs into the case of some grand organ to see for the first time its intricate and multifarious mechanism, and realizes that that vast complex of perhaps as many as ten thousand separate pieces has been the gradual production of the mechanical ingenuity, the musical enterprise, and the religious ardor of a whole millennium, he cannot escape the feeling that whatever musical voice can be drawn from such a consecrated monument must possess the accumulated eloquence of the ages.

While this historic quality in the modern church organ is rarely noticed, only less rare is the knowledge that the organ is the most complicated of musical instruments. Every organist encounters the notion that his organ consists merely of a set of keys and stop-knobs, a row of decorated pipes, and a bellows worked by a handle, the whole standing in a case of more or less elaboration; that the keys and stops operate an involved net-work of trackers, sliders, rollers, levers, springs, and valves ten times as extensive as the action of a grand piano; that the decorated pipes are but about half of one set of pipes, while there are perhaps fifty other sets, having from thirty to sixty or even two hundred and fifty pipes each, thus making the total number of separate pipes anywhere from five hundred to three thousand; that these pipes vary in length, shape, and material so that, although each single pipe can produce but one tone, from all can be drawn a strange variety of tones, to be blended or contrasted at the player's will; that the bellows propels compressed air through a system of wind-trunks, wind-chests, canals, valves, etc., that almost rivals the circulatory system of the human body,—these facts are but dimly appreciated by many who recognize the supreme magnificence of the organ as an instrument.

The intricacy of the pipe organ makes the purchase of one an affair of some risk and difficulty. A hundred dollars, with reasonable care, will certainly secure a really good reed organ, but a thousand dollars may or may not secure a good pipe organ. This is so because a reed organ is bought ready-made, while a pipe organ is usually made to order. The best pipe-organ makers, after they know the sum to be expended, may be trusted to draw up their own specifications; but churches often pay sad penalties for patronizing incompetent or unprincipled firms. It would be impossible here to show how this misfortune may be wholly avoided, but a few general hints may be hazarded.

First. The mechanical construction, even in a small organ, should be unexceptionable. The "action"— the whole mechanism of keys and stop-knobs — should be strong, well-seasoned, and nicely finished, so that every piece shall work promptly, freely, and noiselessly. The action is the means whereby the player handles the organ proper, and if it is faulty, not the greatest player in the world can play the organ well. The blowing apparatus, whether operated by hand or by water, should be ample enough easily to meet the heaviest chord-playing, with every stop drawn. A short-winded organ is as tantalizing and cheap as a horse with the heaves. The metal and wood used in the pipes should be rigorously kept to the standards set by first-class makers. The richness of tone of metal pipes depends largely upon their percentage of tin. But pure tin is expensive, and small organs are apt to be cheapened in this particular.

Second. The power and variety of an organ is indicated by the number and nature of its speaking-stops. A speaking-stop always involves a separate set of pipes, one for each key of the key-board. Mechanical accessories, like couplers and the tremulant, are not speaking-stops, though they often have knobs like the latter. Such accessories are most necessary, but they do not constitute the organ proper. Nothing is more ridiculous than the common practice of counting the "bellows-signal" as a "stop."

The speaking-stops are classified either by quality of tone or by pitch. Four kinds of quality may be named: the true organ quality, as shown in the open diapason, octave, principal, mixture, fifteenth; the flute quality, as in the stopped diapason, flutes, bourdons; the string quality, as in the dulciana, salicional, gamba, violin; and the reed quality, as in the oboe, trumpet, clarinet. A good organ contains stops of all these qualities for each bank of keys, but with a predominance of the first two. The organ quality is needed for sonority, breadth, stateliness; the flute quality, for smooth and full sweetness, approaching that of the human voice; the string quality, for a thin, incisive delicacy, having great distinctness with little force; and the reed quality, for passionate, sumptuous effects, and for leadership in accompanying voices. Old organs are defective in not distinguishing sharply between the different qualities. The ideal organ contains stops so individual in quality as to present great contrasts, and yet so consonant as to blend perfectly when used together. Within each class the stops are further classified according to pitch. Those which yield tones exactly corresponding to the keys struck are called "eight foot" stops; those sounding the next higher octave are called "four foot" stops; those sounding the second higher octave, "two foot" stops; and those sounding the next octave below, "sixteen foot." The sonority and brilliance of an organ is due to a skillful combination of all these pitches, but the proportion must be left to the builder.

Third. The success of an organ depends much upon the place where it is put. It should not be tucked into a narrow recess or close under a ceiling. If it is cramped it will emit husky tones, and be constantly getting out of order in inconvenient spots. It should be tenderly protected from dampness, and from excessive heat and cold. A large organ is exceedingly sensitive to changes of humidity or temperature, and it should be guarded from violent contrasts as much as possible. A window above or near it may cause incessant derangements. As to the question whether the organ should be behind and above the congregation or in front of them and on the same level, it is enough to say that in the latter position congregational singing is more feasible, and the fancied separation of interests between "the two ends of the church," the minister and the choir, is deprived of all outward symbol. The good sense of our churches is shown in the growing custom of leading the musical service as well as the verbal service from a point in front of the worshipers.

The Reed Organ. This is a convenient substitute for the true church organ, when the expense of the latter is too great. It has the further advantages of portability and simplicity. It may be examined before purchase, and so precisely adapted to its work. It must be confessed that it has decided defects. Its tone at the best is apt to be thin and wheezy, lacking promptness and variety. It therefore proves rather a slender support for the volume of congregational singing, while its uncertain "attack" renders it nearly useless as a leading instrument. Except in small buildings, it also fails of the majesty of tone that is indispensable for all solo use of the organ.

This criticism may safely be urged without detracting in the least from the peculiar utility of the reed organ in hundreds of country communities where the pipe organ is out of the question.*

The Piano. The percussive nature of the piano tone unfits it for competing successfully with either the pipe or the reed organ as a solo church instrument. But that same characteristic constitutes it the best instrument for rehearsals and for all gatherings where a certain amount of drill in singing is expected. Precision and regularity of rhythm may be secured with the piano as by no other means. Wherever it can be afforded, a piano in the chapel or lecture-room of the church is a useful part of the musical equipment.

The Cornet. This has been used somewhat as a leader (with the organ) of congregational singing. Its utility lies in reënforcing the melody of a tune without impairing the fullness of the harmony. When played accurately and smoothly, without the blare of the military band, it is quite effective. Berlioz calls the tone of the cornet, especially in rapid melodies, "snapping, noisy, bold," and it must be confessed that, except in the hands of a masterly player, its quality is not entirely agreeable or appropriate to the church. For this reason it is a pity that we no longer have the true trumpet, with its long tube, unbroken by valves, or that we do not imitate the fine old custom of the Moravians in supporting congregational singing by a quartette of trombones.

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* Very striking experiments have lately been made with a new kind of reed organ, which promise to eventuate in a very valuable church instrument.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC. The custom of having organ preludes to church services is quite general, and rests upon the soundest wisdom. The congregation, composed of a variety of persons, young and old, happy and sorrowful, devout and heedless, has gathered to engage in a common act of worship. Their thoughts, desires, moods, are heterogeneous to the last degree. Before they can unite in exercises of verbal worship, they need to be solemnized, softened, made sympathetic with each other, by some influence unique and irresistible. This process is begun by the associations of Sunday itself. It is carried forward by whatever of sacred design there may be in the church edifice, and by the reverent bearing of the more thoughtful worshipers. But it may receive its most powerful stimulus from the organist's prelude. That prelude should be selected and performed with but one purpose, so to capture the attention and the emotion of every worshiper by its beauty, its solemnity, its grandeur, that at its close the organist may hand over the assembly to the minister in a united, tender, and uplifted mood, eager for the utterance of verbal prayer and praise, or for the reception of instruction. For the attainment of this ideal, the organist must be thrilled with an earnest ambition, and the people must yield themselves habitually to his influence. Time enough should be allotted to the prelude to give it a secure hold upon the congregation's mood. The people should be encouraged to come early enough to be quietly seated before it begins. The minister should be in his place, setting an example of attention, and prepared to take up the verbal service with energy and dignity. The service should always be said to begin with the prelude, for if the prelude be not a part of the service, it ought to be omitted altogether.

At many points in the service where, in turning from one kind of exercise to another, the attention and fervor of the congregation are in danger of being diverted and dissipated, brief organ responses or interludes may be introduced with happy results. The unique utility of such interludes is only just beginning to be appreciated by our churches. Of course, however, they cannot be suitable unless they are fitted with the utmost delicacy to what precedes and follows them.

After the benediction a noisy postlude is commonly played. The reasonableness of the custom may well be questioned. Such a postlude is only a show-piece, exhibiting the resources of the organ and the dexterity of the player; it is, indeed, "only a gaudy kite, dangling in the topmost branches of the service." The custom is not defended upon any serious ground, and is receiving more and more condemnation. The only kind of a postlude that is admissible is a quiet meditation or commentary upon the service, its character being determined by the prevailing tone of the latter. In opposition to this idea it may fairly be urged that if the congregation springs to its feet and starts as one man for the door at the last word of the benediction, it is hardly in a way to be impressed by a musical summary of the foregoing service. But this does not alter the devout organist's duty. He is to proceed according to the proprieties of the situation, patiently awaiting that happy time when congregations shall have leisure and reverence enough to spend a few moments in silent prayer or in simple meditation before passing out into the secular world. The congregation of at least one church in the country is said to remain unbroken until after the organist's postlude is concluded.

Whatever detailed habits may prevail in different places, too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the spiritual utility of pure organ music. If such music be performed and received without spiritual intent, it will certainly prove harmful in every direction. But if it be offered and accepted as a true musical sermon, less intellectual, but perhaps more intensely emotional than the average verbal sermon, it will be of inestimable value. One is constrained to appeal by every entreaty to the honor, the good sense, the earnest spirit of organists and of congregations everywhere to join in elevating this branch of music to its true dignity and power.

VI

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

THE good old word "liturgical" has had a queer history. It comes from two Greek words signifying "belonging to the people," and "work," or "act"; and its early application was to something "performed by the people," *i. e.*, by the congregation. In apostolic times, when the term first entered the Christian vocabulary, every exercise of public worship was liturgical, for each was regarded as the common act of the worshiping assembly. In the usage of to-day, however, the word is popularly supposed always to refer to a prescribed and invariable liturgy, though more careful writers still apply it to every act of public worship, whether premeditated or extempore, even if performed by an individual.

The functions of the congregation, as distinguished from the officiating priest or minister, have been different under different ecclesiastical systems. In the Old Testament, the people form a very distinct class from the priests and Levites. The latter classes were the active agents in public worship, offering sacrifices, singing praise, preferring petitions on behalf of the people. The people provided the material for sacrifice and were usually present to witness more important rites, but their direct participation in public worship was limited. Even if we admit that this fact was partly due to the low average of popular knowledge and to the lack of printed books, we discover that it was also due to the inferior position of the congregation. In later Jewish history the activity of the people increased, particularly when the synagogues became the habitual gathering-place of worshipers. In the synagogue, the parent of the Christian church, there was neither priest nor sacrifice, but all the worshipers entered together and equally into the acts of prayer and praise. In apostolic times this united, direct activity of the assembly continued, and it was greatly extended in the two or three following centuries. Before the fifth century, however, the hierarchical tendencies of the church began to be very marked, so that from the time of Gregory the Great (about 600) the exercises of public worship were almost entirely transferred from the congregation at large to the priests and their regular assistants. This restriction became steadily more noticeable throughout the middle ages until the beginning of the Reformation era, say about 1500. One of the first efforts of Luther was to restore not only the doctrines of justification by faith and of the priesthood of the individual believer, and the right to the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, but the privilege of popular participation in public worship. So important did he regard this latter point that one of his first acts, long before he had asserted his doctrinal position in its final form, and long before he had published his translation of the Bible, was to arrange and issue an order of service, in the whole of which, excepting the Scripture lessons and the sermon, the entire congregation was to engage. This congregational method of worship was not a matter of taste, but a direct fruit of the spirit of Reformation; and consequently it was quickly adopted wherever the Reformation spread, becoming one of the badges of both Lutherans and Calvinists. Before 1600 it had become the fixed habit of Protestants in Germany, France, England, and the Low Countries. In 1620 it was imported to America. Its persistence as a distinctively Protestant custom has varied somewhat with circumstances, but it has never been given up. The Church of England liturgy is emphatically a congregational form of worship, as indeed are all Protestant liturgies. The depth to which the idea of congregational worship has penetrated is indicated by the fact that every time of spiritual awakening witnesses a marked increase in the fervor of all congregational exercises of worship. The Roman Catholic Church is on principle opposed to much congregational worship, and has never encouraged it except when forced to do so by the pressure of Protestant competition.

This brief historical survey leads irresistibly to one or two important practical conclusions. If congregational habits of public worship are radically and peculiarly Protestant, such habits should be diligently fostered and built up wherever the Protestant Church goes. Where such habits have been neglected, they should be restored. Where they exist, they should be extended and improved. Their maintenance may be urged primarily as a Protestant duty, but assuredly also as a heritage from a glorious past and as a privilege of no small moment.

The force of this argument has been strongly felt in American unepiscopal churches during the last few years. They have begun to see that in their protest against the Episcopacy of the eighteenth century they went to an extreme in many matters not involved in the original revolt. They have not only fallen into bald and irregular habits of worship, dependent upon the caprice of officiating ministers, but in their exaltation of the teaching office of the pulpit they have almost forgotten the worshiping office of the pew. Accordingly, throughout the land arises a cry for the enrichment of public worship, especially in the direction of congregational participation. Hence come the growing use of responsive reading, of formulæ of prayer and confession, in which all the people may join, and of congregational hymn-singing.

Surely, if we are minded to imitate the practices of the early Reformation time, there is no item that would be more attractive and valuable than the united singing of hymns and psalms. In those days, as in the Wesleyan movement in the eighteenth century, thousands were converted simply through the agency of song. To be a fervent Protestant then, as in the age of Elizabeth in England, or in the early New England period, was to be a singer. The multiplication in Germany of hymns and tunes for congregational use during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was almost incredibly rapid. Many of our most stalwart and inspiring church lyrics were composed in the glow of such critical epochs as that of the Reformation or of the minor awakenings of English Christianity. Wherever to-day any special evangelical fervor appears, there enthusiastic hymn-singing inevitably breaks forth. So far as data may be secured, we find that pastors are practically a unit in desiring the custom of congregational song. Every church that has enjoyed it in any respectable form is warmly attached to it as a means of edification. Even the current of thoughtless opinion seems to have set in its favor more than twenty-five years ago. In view of these facts, why is it that congregational singing is not more universally attempted and more uniformly successful?

First. It is not always remembered that congregational singing is emphatically an *expressive* form of music. Its purpose is not to affect the auditor, but to utter the emotions and thoughts of the singer. It neither aspires to artistic perfection nor offers itself to artistic criticism. Its whole nature is not objective, but subjective. Philosophically considered, it is quite the opposite of choral oratorio music. Its best success depends primarily upon its universality, and its fervor throughout the given assembly. These qualities are mightily enhanced, no doubt, by artistic excellence, both in music and in performance, but such excellence is a secondary consideration.

Professional musicians are apt to speak lightly of congregational singing as "unbearable," or "unmanageable," or "chimerical." But, do they not view it from an unfair stand-point? And even from that stand-point, may not its harsh and trying characteristics be mollified by patient, tactful effort that, while its expressive value is preserved, its technical excellence may be gradually improved? To this we shall return in a moment.

Second. It is not always remembered that since congregational singing is essentially expressive, it can flourish only where there is a congregational spirituality that craves expression. If it is true that such singing requires a congregation at least large enough to deserve the name, it is still more true that it requires a worshipful congregation. When one enters some city church where half the attendants are either not professing Christians or casual visitors, he sees at once why congregational singing has languished into a laughing-stock. If he turns to another church where, through the minister's coldness or some parish dissension, the general spiritual tone is low, he feels at once the impossibility there of any form of enthusiastic emotional utterance. But if he visits some live, working church or some evangelist's tent, he finds that there united singing is not only easily secured but inevitable. The difference is wholly in the temper of the assemblies.

Third. Congregational singing will not flourish without encouragement from the pastor and the church musicians, and without effort from the individual members of the congregation itself. It will not run itself, nor advance without guidance, nor attain its full stature until every regular worshiper feels a personal responsibility about it.

What can the pastor do? He can be so earnest in his general work that his people shall be religiously active and warm. He can preach upon joy and gratitude and the utterance of joy and gratitude as important elements in a true religious experience. He can explain the value and dignity of congregational singing historically, theoretically, and actually. He can personally supervise and countenance whatever efforts are made for technical improvement. He can so arrange the details of actual services that the hymns shall be suitable and attractive for congregational rendering.

What can the organist and the choir do? They can assume the responsibility for the technical excellence of the singing. They can actively acknowledge the central position of congregational music in the Protestant musical system, realizing that without such music all other music is out of relation and apt to become mischievous. The organist can endeavor, under the general direction of the pastor, to build up the technical proficiency of the young people by drill in the Sunday-school, by special classes in sight-reading and part-singing, and by a study of playing for popular singing. The singers may throw themselves into the hymn-singing with such heartiness that the contagion of their enthusiasm may permeate the entire assembly.

What can the people do? They can regard the singing as a personal duty and privilege. They can conscientiously endeavor to adopt the words of the hymns as their own private utterance, and to engage in the singing of those words with the utmost precision and technical finish of which they are capable. They can keep themselves alert to see where their individual performance may be altered so as to better the general effect. They can be ambitious to extend their facilities by the study of new tunes. They can make it a church duty to attend any classes for singing that the pastor or the organist may establish, so as to gain in their own vocal readiness and also to lend the aid of their presence in sustaining such efforts. They can help along the cause of congregational music everywhere by cultivating an enthusiasm for it and by strictly repressing captious criticism of it. They can insist that their musical representatives and leaders shall pay due respect to this department of the parish music.

Before the habit of congregational singing can be accepted as it deserves, there must be a wider popular interest in singing. The extending practice of teaching singing in the public schools should therefore receive the heartiest support of Christian people; for such teaching implants musical taste and skill where they will bear the most abundant fruit. Another invaluable agency is the choral society or club, in which music of a high order is studied. It might be argued with force that the formation and support of such societies is usually a fruitful church investment in more than one way. Great emphasis should be laid upon a wider popular ability to read vocal music at sight. Music, as a language, stands a slender chance of adequate use so long as her words and sentences have to be laboriously spelled out with the help of a piano, or caught, parrot-fashion, from the voice of a teacher. Every encouragement is due to any reasonable system of teaching singers to read promptly and accurately by note. The achievements of the Tonic Sol-Fa system in England in this particular deserve the highest praise; and our churches may well be grateful if similar results can be produced here.

Much of the practical success of congregational music depends upon the hymn-book used. We shall treat the general subject of hymn-books in a separate chapter. We may content ourselves now with expressing the hope that some way may be found of so diminishing the size and costliness of books that every church can procure copies enough for all the congregation. It is to be hoped also that editors may exercise more and more care about the selection of tunes and about the fitting of tunes to particular hymns. Every book in common use contains a large proportion of waste material. In using any fairly good hymn-book there is great gain in making the range of selection of tunes progressive from year to year. Much is said of the importance or the necessity of limiting congregational singing to the "old tunes." There is evident force in the argument, but it is often pushed to an extreme. Indolence and cowardice are not seldom the real reasons for contenting one's self with some twenty-five standard tunes. When such a broad, attractive, and fruitful field for progress is open as that provided by the English tunes of the last twenty years, it is a pity not to take advantage of the stimulus that its conquest would undoubtedly afford.

In order to make progress systematic, the pastor or organist should keep a record of tunes sung, and, within reasonable bounds, should strive to maintain a steady movement away from the more trivial toward the more stately tunes. The *répertoire* of an average congregation should surely be not less than a hundred tunes.

It is a disputed question whether any attempts at congregational chanting should be made. The devotional utility of chanting is undisputed, but the practical difficulty of securing satisfactory renderings from a miscellaneous assembly of singers is immense. It must be confessed that most congregations are without the vocal experience and the training in united performance that are indispensable. The current theories of chanting are open to grave objections. Until a live opposition exists against a hurried, manneristic style of treating the words, because it is thought to be English, substantial progress in this direction is doubtful. The fact remains, however, that the congregational chanting that may be heard in many a village church in England, in Dr. Allon's church in London, and in some Swedenborgian churches in America, is something to be emulated and pursued wherever its attainment is at all possible.

Congregational singing is the most practicable as well as the most important department of church music. Its glories are within the reach of every active parish. Its restoration as a universal custom is certain, and its supremacy among the forms of church music is only a question of spirituality in Christian work. Its establishment involves no risk or undue expense, and its success can bring with it no dangers. On the contrary, its maintenance is almost of necessity a distinct and powerful spur to the religious life of the parish, refreshing, cheering, and edifying all who come within its influence.

VII

THE CHOIR

PERHAPS one who has read our argument in favor of congregational singing, regarded as the distinctive and central feature of the Protestant musical system, may wonder what we are to do with the choir. Is the choir idea all a mistake? Have we, in order to be consistent, to revolutionize our long-established customs? Fortunately, any such revolution, which is obviously impracticable, is not in the least called for by our line of thought. The choir is an institution which the Protestant Church cannot afford to lose, although she may construe its duties somewhat differently from the Roman Catholic Church. Its duties may be fully correlated with the supremacy of the congregation, so that the integrity of the Protestant musical system shall not be impaired. Its utility as a part of the apparatus of public worship may be amply justified, so that its position shall be one of honor and influence. Indeed, the deeper we penetrate into the philosophy of church music, the more evident it is that the ideal balance of agencies demands both congregational and choir music, even though it be necessary to insist upon the former as an antecedent of the latter.

We shall proceed upon the thought that real progress with the questions that arise concerning the choir may be expected more from a discussion of the purposes of the choir as an institution than of the precise form of the choir. Much energy has undoubtedly been wasted upon comparatively useless comparisons between the quartette and the chorus, or between paid and volunteer choirs. If some of the same energy were put upon a study of the ideals that should govern the management of choirs, however constituted, most of the worst puzzles in the field would become insignificant. Here, as elsewhere in church work, too much importance is often attached to the exact form of machinery used, and too little to the personal and spiritual elements. Consequently, we find strong partisans for the quartette plan, or for the chorus plan, with much wholesale condemnation of the tactlessness of leaders and the incompetence of singers, and with not a little sensitiveness in some quarters about the whole subject, as if it were inherently dangerous; while neither ministers nor musicians nor congregations think of framing or adopting any well-considered notion of what choirs are for or what choir music has shown itself able to do.

In some cases, however, inadequate or false theories of the choir appear. In many churches it is maintained upon merely traditionary grounds, the custom of the last three or four generations commanding assent for its own sake. In some churches it is said that larger or choicer audiences, or more adequate lists of pew-rents, or more prestige among the churches of the neighborhood can be secured by having a choir that shall command public notice and fame; that is, the choir is thought to be a good investment for the prosperity of the church as a business enterprise. In a few instances this unworthy theory is pushed to an offensive extreme, and the consequence has been often a reaction which, in its turn, has ended in narrow or indefensible theories. In the midst of the contests between the advocates and the opponents of choirs, with all their varying views, a large but silent party always exists that feels, more or less definitely, that choir music somehow has a mission both valuable and unique.

The substance of the best thought of this middle party may be summarized as follows. The choir, as a piece of the mechanism of Protestant worship, must be treated as a segment of the general congregation, having special functions. Its relation to the congregation is closely analogous to that of the minister himself. While the Roman Catholic priest is set over his parish by the Church, as represented in the bishop, the Protestant minister is actually or virtually the choice of the particular congregation. He is responsible to his people as the representatives in a given community of the Church Universal. Before he can be thus chosen he must have had some professional training, from which, as well as from the fact of the choice itself, he possesses also a right to receive deference as a divinely constituted teacher. In short, the minister's commission as pastor emanates from the congregation, although his commission as preacher emanates from Christ. When he undertakes the management of public worship, his two offices, although blended, can still be distinguished. In preaching and in expounding the Bible, the office of herald is much more prominent; but in conducting all other exercises, the office of minister, in the strict sense, steps forth into view. In his latter capacity the minister acts in one of three ways,—either (1) as leader or captain of the congregation in exercises that it cannot perform itself directly, since a large assembly cannot easily engage in united exercises without looking to some one person as guide; or (2), as deputy of the congregation in exercises that it must or will perform vicariously, since some forms of worship are neither possible nor expedient for a large assembly; or (3), as model and incentive to the congregation, both in the manner and in the spirit of worship. The customary arrangement of our church services doubtless has suffered the second of these three functions to overshadow the first, while the third is but spasmodically remembered, though appreciation of their importance and relations is increasing.

If, now, we carry out the analogy between the duties of the minister and those of the choir, we note that the choir should be (1) a leader and guide to all congregational music; (2) a substitute for the congregation in such musical utterances as the people would offer if they could; and (3) a stimulus to the people to devoutness in worship. Furthermore, as the minister is also herald or teacher, so the choir should also strive to convey spiritual instruction through the medium of song. In short, while the choir should assist both directly and representatively in expressive music, it should also apply the undoubted impressive powers of music; thus contributing to each of the three purposes of public worship already named.

Before passing to the details of choir music, we must turn for a moment to consider the *personnel* of the choir. Whether the above statement of the functions of the choir, as an analogue in the Protestant system of the minister, be fully accepted or not, the fact remains that, in some way, the members of the choir have a responsible share in the economy of public worship, acting either to utter or to induce a worshipful frame of mind. Here again, as in the case of the organist, the inference is unavoidable that their duties cannot be properly performed unless they are participants in the worship themselves. On the side of expressive music, even if offered vicariously by the choir on behalf of the people, we are taught that God is to be worshiped "in spirit and in truth." On the side of impressive music, we may well quote from Paul's counsel to Timothy: "Be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity, . . . for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." Nothing short of a general conviction, systematically followed, that the musical elements of public worship can be properly offered only by devout musicians, will place church music beyond the liability to grave complications and a sad desecration of God's house.

The precise form of the choir is of comparatively little importance if its fundamental purpose and temper be right. Perhaps the opinion may be hazarded that for the mere leadership of congregational singing a precentor or a chorus is best; that for vicarious praise a chorus most nearly resembles the assembly which it represents; and that for strictly impressive music a highly trained soloist or quartette is the most effective. The peculiarly American custom of a quartette which is expected to perform all the music of the church is fortunately passing away. It grew up in a period of low musical cultivation among the people, and of comparative heedlessness to the just management of public worship. All its advantages, without its limitations and dangers, may be secured through a chorus containing two or more solo singers. According to the views just expressed, this is the ideal form of the choir, and it is the form universally aimed at in the churches of England and Germany.

With every form of choir there are difficulties to be surmounted. In the first selection it is imperative that as many as possible of the singers shall come from the congregation itself. In any case, the singers should be made to feel that the choir is but a specialized division of the congregation.

Their responsibility as controlling agents in the worship should be deeply felt by them. Whether they are paid for their service or not, they should count attendance at rehearsals and strict attention to the leader or organist a religious duty. They should endeavor to sink personal ambitions and desires, and to devote themselves with singleness of heart to the attainment of the solemn devotional purposes of a choir. Whatever they do should be done "in the name of the Lord." Like the singers of the Temple, who sung "with gladness and bowed their heads and worshiped," they should be specially consecrated, enthusiastic, and reverent; and their calling should be an honorable one "in the sight of all men."

Choir music, as an element of public worship, supplies a real want. It must be granted that congregational music, with all its value, has grave limitations. Only very simple musical forms are feasible for congregational rendering. Even the noblest of our tunes do not begin to exhaust the expressive capacities of sacred music, and they are, perforce, arranged only for metrical texts. The first lack in public worship that a choir may supply, then, is of such anthem or chant settings of metrical and especially of unmetrical texts as would be entirely unpracticable for the congregation as a whole, and yet such as they might properly wish to use as a collective utterance if they had the technical ability. The "Gloria in excelsis" and the "Te Deum" are striking examples of this class of texts.

The second lack that choir music may supply is of such vocal music as shall induce and foster in the congregation, however composed, a deeper and more intelligent spirit of worship. Under the ministry of such impressive music, when fully fitted to its place and reënforced by the personal power of consecrated singers, a vast assembly may be touched and sobered as by the sound of an angel's voice. The fervor of expressive worship probably cannot rise above the point where there still is room for the added refinement and exaltation of such impressive music. In the face of the critical, materialistic spirit of the age, even at the risk of being called sentimental, our churches would do well to seek a more habitual warmth of mood in public worship. One of the surest means of fostering such a mood is through suitable choir music. The service as a whole may be ushered in by a musical call to worship, growing directly out of the organ prelude. The transition from one exercise to another may be rendered more easy and solemn by a musical supplication or ascription. The collection of offerings may be accompanied by a fit musical petition or dedication. The sermon may be prefaced or followed by a musical sentence referring to the Truth or the Gospel, or to the particular theme of the discourse itself. Some of these choir sentences may be strictly impressive, some strictly expressive, being offered in the name of the people, and some may combine the two qualities.

The third lack that choir music may supply is of such musical settings of Scriptural texts as shall illumine their meaning and stamp them upon the memory of the congregation. That music is able to supplement the mere words of a Biblical or other text, so as to make it distinctly more effective, is a fact somewhat generally conceded. No further proof need be cited than the well-known light and power that has been thrown by music upon the sacred narratives embodied in the oratorios "The Messiah," "The Passion Music," and "Elijah," not to speak of a host of lesser works. What is thus done upon a large scale may be done upon a small scale by short choir sentences. When brought out by suitable music and rendered with skill and feeling, many a choice fragment of Holy Writ may thus find a home in the memory of thoughtless listeners, or penetrate the skeptical armor of some unbeliever, or fall like balm upon some wounded spirit.

Just as our first practical conclusion, as respects the structure of the choir, was that its members could not perform their sacred duties without being actually worshipers, so here our inevitable conclusion is that choir music cannot perform its mission unless the greatest care is exercised about the texts that are chosen. The indiscriminate use of any text that has a churchly flavor, or even of texts that are only commended by the sweet or stately music that is adapted to them, is very objectionable. None but such texts as shall distinctly supply one of the three lacks just named should be used; and none of these should be placed at any point in the service without careful consideration of its fitness and effectiveness in connection with what precedes and follows it. What may be most valuable as a climax of several acts of prayer and praise, when the feelings of the people have been stirred into enthusiasm, may be totally inapt and useless as an introductory exercise. The elaborate anthems often placed in the forefront of a service, being in no sense preparatory, but rather confirmatory or completive, naturally degenerate into the "show-pieces" that they are vulgarly supposed to be. All such pieces should be imbedded in the body of the service, where their connection with the acts of congregational prayer and praise may be obvious. There is a crying need of a systematic study of actual texts of anthems on the part of choir-masters, composers, and publishers, with a view to determine how far and when each is suitable, and to classify them accordingly. Collections of anthems should be arranged by topic, so that a rational selection may be easily made. Great care should be taken to distinguish between the different kinds of choir music, so that the mental attitude of the singers shall be adapted to what they are doing. No pains can be too great to secure a delicate adjustment of anthems and sentences to the parts of the service next to them; for half the effectiveness of an exercise of public worship is due to its full union and harmony with its fellows.

If the texts of choir pieces deserve the importance here given them, they certainly require such a rendering as shall make them entirely intelligible to the hearer. The horrible mangling of the words that is sometimes heard in church is as inartistic as it is undevotional. It defeats all right intentions. It shows a slovenly and stupid spirit in the performer and in the trainer. It completely emasculates the exercise of all that intellectual quality that for the sake of the hearer it ought to have. It is fundamentally opposed to every proper theory of what choir music is for. Even when the enunciation of the singers is clear, it is an excellent plan to have the text of an anthem announced beforehand from the pulpit, particularly if in so doing the minister can add a word that shall give it a neater setting in relation to the other exercises of the service. Another excellent plan for churches whose customs are well settled is to put printed copies of the various anthems that form the church's *répertoire* into the pews, and have the anthem announced by number like a hymn. This plan is in successful use in some of the English cathedrals.

A word may be added about the treatment that a choir should receive from the congregation which it serves. Every trace of the antiquated notion that the choir is the foe of the congregation should be banished. The people should endeavor to help the singers by giving them the support of hearty respect and sympathy in whatever they do. The habit of criticising the choir's performances as a reporter criticises a concert is mischievous and unchristian. The question about an anthem is not, "Was it beautiful?" or, "Was it finely sung?" but, "Was it devotionally impressive? Was it successful in moving the feeling of the congregation?" If the average choir could but feel that the congregation expected spiritual quickening from their performances, they would have a mighty incentive to care and earnestness, where now they are content only to amuse or win applause. The elevation of choir music into the sphere of noble usefulness that belongs to it must come not only through greater care in the selection of singers and of music, but also through a revolution in the prevalent popular requirements from choirs. The churches can have what they want, but they must vehemently want something because they know it is good.

VIII

HYMN-BOOKS

THE old-fashioned hymn-book, without music, has passed away. All our current hymnals take the responsibility of linking hymns and tunes together, "for better, for worse." This fact, which vastly increases the practical difficulty of choosing a hymn-book, obliges us to speak of hymn-books first as collections of hymns, and second as collections of tunes.

First. In pioneer work, and in certain phases of established church life, like the Sunday-school, the church hymnal may yet, to a limited extent, be both a general collection of religious poetry and a special channel of doctrinal instruction; but in an organized congregation, sacred poetry and dogmatic theology may be studied to better advantage elsewhere. The time has come to make the church hymnal simply a specialized hand-book for one kind of public worship. A hymnal evidently ought to contain only such poems as are suitable for insertion into the regular order of stated public worship as poetical expressions of the sentiments that may be expected to demand utterance in an assembly of Christian worshipers. We may safely insist that these poems shall have lyric beauty, an expressive tone or method, adaptation to the use of stated Christian gatherings, and feasibility for musical rendering. Let us examine these qualities in order.

1. The point has often been discussed whether a high degree of strictly poetic excellence is compatible with the conditions of ecclesiastical or even of religious poetry. Even our best collections of hymns are strikingly deficient in really fine poetry, and some hymns that are very popular are open to grave literary objections. Yet, happily, many hymns do rise to a decided literary merit, and it often seems that we should have more fine hymns if popular taste were only discriminating enough to encourage them. It is certainly not too much to ask that hymns shall have unity and balance of

structure, sonority and taste of diction and versification, aptness and delicacy of metaphor, dignity and precision of thought, spiritual depth, and general originality and individuality. Instead of running the risk of offense by mentioning unpoetical hymns, we will simply cite a few hymns that are both beautiful and useful. Ellerton's "Saviour, again to Thy dear name" exhibits a decided structural perfection; Montgomery's paraphrase of the seventy-second Psalm, "Hail to the Lord's Anointed," has much verbal magnificence; Watts's "O God, our help in ages past," is surely majestic in its rendering of the thought of the ninetieth Psalm; Ray Palmer's "My faith looks up to Thee" is conceded to be a model of spirituality in hymn-writing; How's splendid marching hymn, "For all the saints, who from their labors rest," is sufficiently original and individual to rank as one of the best of the battle-hymns of the Church Universal.

Hymn-writing easily degenerates into machine-work. The pioneers of English hymnody did much such work, though they should not be blamed for the sins of their imitators. The modern English hymns need careful sifting, for the very force of the recent enthusiasm for fine hymns has brought out many pretentious echoes that deserve rebuke. The same is true of the Latin and German hymns,—clever patchwork often resembling real poetic creation. While it is hard to set up any definite standard of technical perfection by which to try our hymns, it is possible to create a demand for books that shall be critically edited in this regard, and to encourage the minute study of hymns with reference to their structure and elegance.

2. That hymns, which belong to the genus of lyrical poetry and are intended for use in collective public worship, should be strongly expressive of feeling, rather than didactic or descriptive, would seem to be a truism; yet a large proportion of our ordinary hymns might more properly be addressed to the worshiper than uttered by him. If impressive hymns were always sung by a choir they would not be so objectionable, though their right to a place in a hymnal might be disputed. What is wanted are hymns of *utterance*, having a burden of outspoken adoration or thanksgiving, of trust or consecration, of confession or petition. Didactic or descriptive

matter may be introduced into such hymns for the sake of clearness, but its subordination should be obvious. All the earlier English hymnists indulged in the didactic and hortatory style too much; their hymns are really addresses by the writer to Christian congregations, very excellent in their way, but wholly out of place in modern hymnals. Hymns of self-exhortation or of mutual encouragement are much less objectionable. A preponderance of strictly personal hymns, using the first personal pronoun, is undesirable, because it stultifies the act of collective utterance. The use of Biblical phraseology is eminently useful, both for its elevation of the general tone of thought and for its indirect extension of familiarity with the Book. Even very intense forms of expression may occur, for the enthusiasm of a fervent congregation can make use of the utmost powers of language without exaggeration.

3. Hymns should be selected for hymnals with constant reference to the actual requirements of church worship. Our ordinary services provide for three hymns, and it would seem that some difference might customarily be made between them; but it is rare to find any attempt made in hymnals to mark such a difference. At least we might have some demarcation between general, objective hymns, which are hymns of the church as a whole, and personal, subjective hymns, which are hymns of the individual Christian. Our hymnals tend too much to the latter class. The result is that our hymn-singing does not stir enough the sentiments of enthusiasm and exultation over the church as an institution, as an organized power, as a conquering army. We need more peans of joyful consecration, more battle-hymns, more triumph-songs.

After what has been said about congregational singing, it is needless to urge that a hymnal should be prepared exclusively for use by the congregation. Hymns for choir rendering, hymns for pulpit reading, and hymns for domestic and private devotion should be left for other collections. The one purpose of a church hymnal should be to furnish words that may appropriately be used in congregational exercises.

4. The necessity of fitting metrical tunes to hymns suggests the simple remark that irregular odes, and poems whose clauses run over frequently from line to line, and all uneuphonious verses are unsuitable for a hymnal.

Second. When we turn from the subject of hymns to that of tunes, we pass over into a much less obvious field. A whole book might be written about hymn-tunes, and such a book is perhaps needed. One is dismayed at the popular ignorance about tunes, and the strength of many opinions that are founded merely upon tradition or prejudice. It is doubtful whether steady progress can be made in this feature of church music until more information has become generally disseminated. We will here urge simply that hymn-tunes ought to be musically good, that they should be adapted to the hymns with which they are associated, and that they should be fitted for congregational rendering.

1. Tunes may be classified as chorales, harmonized airs, and part-songs. Chorales are distinguished by a slow movement, strong harmony, and special emphasis upon the successive chords as chords. Harmonized airs sacrifice other qualities to the setting forth of a melody, the other voices being added merely for accompaniment. Part-songs seek to develop each of the voice-parts into true melodies, and yet at the same time to produce solid harmonies; the movement is usually quite brisk. Of course these classes shade into each other, and the traits of each may appear in a single tune. We are just emerging from the time when the harmonized air was the prevailing fashion. Farther back in our history the old English or old American chorale, dignified, strong, and correct, was the rule. We are gradually learning to sing many of the newer English part-songs with satisfaction. It would be well if our hymnals should gradually discard all tunes that are not essentially constructed upon either the chorale or the part-song principle. The harmonized air is an immature form of composition, suitable to some extent in special services, but not dignified enough for congregational singing.

Machine-work is only too common in tunes as well as in hymns. Many of our so-called "standard" American tunes, with not a few of the English tunes, both old and new, are painfully mechanical. The extensive use of promiscuous adaptations of music from various sources has still further lowered the tone of current tunology. It has evidently been thought that originality in tunes was impossible or undesirable. In rebuttal of this notion, one need but mention the astonishing fertility and success of the late Dr. Dykes as a tune-composer. In a general way every tune ought to commend itself by some special beauty either of melody, harmony, or part-writing, so that it may easily and pleasurably be remembered.

2. The best tunes are usually written for some particular hymn, and thus have a striking expressive fitness. But it is not expedient to have a tune for every hymn. Indeed, it is not necessary, for many hymns in the same meter and having the same emotional tone may fitly be sung to the same tune. An effort should be made, however, to avoid a constant shifting of adaptation. Particular care is needed that the tone of hymn and tune shall always correspond. Some editors quite overlook the expressiveness of music, and try combinations of jubilant tunes with plaintive hymns, for instance, with melancholy results.

3. What tunes are fitted for congregational singing of course depends upon the congregation. Owing to the prevalent ignorance about reading music at sight and the incompetence of leaders, there is considerable timidity upon this point. A new tune is approved for congregational singing when it has been learned and sung by an actual congregation. The testimony of such an experiment, however, is generally received with great caution, on the ground that the circumstances must be in some way unusual. Yet it may be confidently asserted that the powers of popular acquisition of new tunes are much underestimated. A good leader, if he commands the confidence of the people, can make good music a success.

The following details, however, may be suggested as making tunes feasible for congregational use. The harmony should be strong, the chords not too much inverted, the modulations simple, extreme discords avoided. The melody should move without long skips or many slurs, and the repetition of several syllables to the same tone is undesirable. Single voice parts should not range over more than nine or ten notes in any one tune. Tunes should be transposed by editors or by organists so that the soprano and tenor shall not rise higher than E. The rhythm of successive lines should not be sharply different. Duple and quadruple rhythms are the best, but triple rhythms with each pulse marked by a note are usually good. The construction of a tune should be musicianly enough to admit of its being sung at a slow tempo, without becoming tedious, or of being played at a quick tempo, without becoming trivial.

With the above general hints about the hymns and tunes that should be sought for in a church hymnal, we turn to the general form of the book. Almost every one agrees that most of our current collections are too large and too expensive. This is partly a result of traditional ideas of what a hymnal ought to contain, and partly an attempt to adapt the same book to the tastes of several different constituencies. An incidental gain in a small book is its compactness and lightness in the hand. In the page-arrangement, care should be taken that the tune belonging to a given hymn should be near it. The type of both words and music should be clear enough for use in dim light. It is very desirable that some data regarding the source or authorship or period of both hymns and tunes should be given in immediate juxtaposition with them, so that even the casual user shall have some notion of the class to which they belong.

In using a hymnal, considerable pains may be profitably spent in laying out a scheme of progressive selection of both hymns and tunes, so that the available material of a given book may be fully utilized, and so that the congregation may acquire the habit of studying and using new examples of both. A hap-hazard selection is to be condemned upon every ground.

The selection of a hymn-book is not an easy matter. It is usually made by a committee who briefly and superficially examine several books, and then content themselves with taking testimony upon their practical utility. The whole question may turn at the last upon some foolish point about the binding or the type. Anything like a systematic comparison of books requires a laborious analysis. Yet the improvement of hymnals can be hastened only by insisting upon having such analyses made and by choosing the book that shows a *statistical* advantage in important respects over its competitors.

IX

RESPONSIVE SERVICES

READING of Holy Scripture by minister and congregation responsively, not known outside of prelatical churches in the days of our fathers, has in recent years entered into the usage of a great number of congregations. The report, in 1886, to the General Association of Massachusetts, from the State Committee on the Work of the Churches, shows that out of four hundred and twenty-two Congregational churches from which statistics on this point had been received by the accurate and diligent secretary of the committee, this mode was in use in one hundred and thirty-eight — nearly one-third. Presbyterian statistics are lacking, but that denomination is known to have a strong though less developed tendency in the same direction.

Like all innovations in the externals of the church, this arouses strenuous opposition through mere prejudice irrespective of its intrinsic good or evil — a prejudice most amenable to reason. But there is also a class of objections which carry the weight of reason as against some of the actual lines which the new method has taken. It is to be conceded that unless a distinct gain be made in the service of the sanctuary by bringing in a multitude of voices, all utterance is most wisely left to the minister appointed and trained for that duty. Those objectors who are consulting the practical edification of a worshiping assembly rather than a prejudice arising from long habit, may lose their objection, or its force, if the advocates of this mode will refrain from applying it outside the limits which are set for it by a principle fundamental in the case.

It is fundamental law in the externals of worship, as in all artistic work in the higher ranges of sentiment, that beauty and impressiveness sought through mere decoration are always missed, but are instantly with us unsought and unannounced as soon as we make our form simply the fit natural expression of our feeling. The beauty of worship in common, its stately grandeur, its tender appeal, will grow of itself, pervading every act in the house of God, if we seek it only along natural lines. To attempt by various devices, merely mechanical and formal, to decorate the service of the sanctuary is to enter on a search for startling novelties, whose crudeness at first distracts the mind from worship, and whose accumulation and hardening through the passing years present at length not the form and body of a living worship, but only its tomb. No power indeed can take from our churches their liberty in Christ Jesus to use any new methods that fit new times or that meet long-neglected wants; but, on the other hand, no power can cause the beauty of the Lord our God to be upon us in his sanctuary while we are concerned chiefly to carry on therewith an impressive show, whether our show be architectural, musical, ritual, intellectual, or oratorical. The responsive element has a place in public service only as it can be shown to arise as a natural expression of Christian sentiment in a public assembly. Three considerations may show it to have naturally such a place.

First. Responsive utterance aids to impress on the memory certain most instructive and edifying portions of Holy Scripture. These, if only falling from the pulpit upon the ears of the young or the unthinking, may easily be unheeded; but if all voices be called forth in their utterance, they will be more likely to fix the attention; or in default of that, a lodgment of the mere words may be effected in the memory, there to await the time for their resurrection into living power.

Second. The responsive form is the most fitting for the presentation of large portions of the Word; indeed, for some portions the only proper form, since they are well known to have been composed for antiphonal use in the ancient public service of God. Beside these passages composed under inspiration for the special purpose of responsive praise, there is a large and most valued portion of the Bible which is antiphonal, or echoing and responsive, in both its thought and its phrase. Thought answers thought; the words by a natural law fall into balancing periods; voice echoes voice; rather, a multitude of voices, called forth by the inspiring sentiment, reduplicate and reënforce it, and by their multiplied testimony the words of truth are established in majesty.

Third. Responsive exercises, bringing the whole assembly into audible utterance, accord with the whole idea of a free, unpriestly, congregational service; while also they fulfill the natural law that the rendering of worship by the hearts of an assembly is greatly aided by the joining of all voices in such selected parts as are intrinsically fitted for that method. Not displacing the more quiet single utterance required in large portions of the service, the combined utterance at its due time rolls in its tide of song or — where song is too artistic — of plain speech; and the worship is not decorated, but simply liberated to move in its own beauty. Indeed it may be broadly said that, whether in the worshipful or the didactic parts of a Christian service, when the thought and the verbal structure are responsive, a restraint of the liberty of natural, orderly responsive expression in song or in speech is an invasion of the rights of the congregation for which no cause can be given more respectable than a pardonable oversight or an unworthy prejudice.

This principle of the natural fitness of the responsive mode in public service, for the impression of truth and the expression of worship, indicates also the limitations which must be observed; for, to its opponents it must be conceded that, out of its natural limits, this style is useless and hindering.

Responsive utterance has no place where the material of the thought or sentiment, or the verbal structure, is not responsive. This rule is unfailing in church service, though it is to be applied not rigidly to every sentence in detail, but to the general character and structure of a passage. Thus, the responsiveness which only makes proper a responsive utterance may consist in the actual answering of one sentence or another as an echo, or in the parallelism, almost synonymy, of clause with clause, or in the particularization in one sentence of a general statement in another, or conversely in the generalization of a particular, or in the amplification, reënforcement, or illustration in one clause of the thought in another, or in the projection in one of a strong contrast to the other. Beside this echo or parallel, or antithesis in both sentiment and structure, there is found in truly responsive passages also some emotional glow, and a certain verbal quality, recognized as essentially poetic, though presenting, perhaps, the simplest and most primitive form of poetry — its very primitiveness and simplicity, and lack of conscious and labored art in rhyme or rhythm fitting it for common divine worship.

This natural rule as to the proper application of responsive utterance forbids us to seek impressiveness by its use with unfit materials. It does not allow us to approve for responsive reading in the church, the narratives which are so large a portion of the Bible, except as they are cast in a lyric form; it does not admit for such use the Epistles in general, though these contain many scattered passages which would fit this use. If we are teaching children, or if we are striving to lodge the Gospel in heathen minds, the expedient of calling and holding the flagging attention by causing our hearers to read verse by verse around in some important portion of the Word may justify itself; but the proprieties of a class of pupils are not those of the worshiping church.

This natural rule indicates to us as proper materials the Psalter,—inspired psalm-book of the ancient church of God,—and noticeably large portions of the book of Job and of the Prophecies; and, with these, any antiphonal songs or prayers scattered through the narratives. As to other antiphonal or even lyric passages, it seems probable that when they are so short as they usually are in the New Testament, they may be more impressively rendered in their natural connection by a single voice; inasmuch as their compilation into a responsive lesson would violently wrench them out of place, as though they were being set up in martial array like proof-texts in a catechism of doctrine, profitable for warfare rather than for kindling or expressing devout feeling. There are great admirers of responsive utterance who would choose never again to hear it in the church, rather than to hear it in portions of the Word, whose continuous narrative, or successive steps of instruction, or exquisite modulations of sentiment, would only be dismembered by its antithesis and confused by its echoes, requiring, instead, one voice in calm, considerate flow. The same admirers of responsive reading would banish it from the church if its use involved in any large degree the mincing up of the sacred Scripture into a heap of fragments snatched from all parts of the Bible, whose divinely natural connection and beautiful unity thus are brought to naught, with this eminently harmful result, that the minds of worshipers become familiarized not with the Word, but with some man's ingenious mosaic of its broken particles. We are called to no superstitious reverence for mere externals of divine revelation, or for the "letter that killeth"; but neither are we called to kill the letter: there is liberty for us to use our Father's words, not being slavishly tied to a chronological order, nor compelled to use them only in large masses; but edification, if not reverence, will set some limit to our disintegrating process, at least in our public services — certainly forbidding a mechanical pulverization. Probably a repulsion from the injudicious applications of the responsive mode, either in unnatural selection of materials or in unnatural arrangement of proper materials, may furnish the reason for opposition to it on the part of those whose opposition arises from reason rather than prejudice.

Concerning the natural arrangement of materials, the great rule of responsive utterance only to express responsive thought, whether in echo, parallel, or antithesis, does not allow us to approve for such reading — what for our own sake we should wish to approve — the division of the Psalter (or other Scriptures) into the verses of our English Bible. Seldom are the verses antiphonal: the parallels or responsive members usually are within a verse, or they are outside of any relation to it. The reading of the Psalter by verse divisions,— venerable from its usage in the Book of Common Prayer in the Church of England,— obliterating the Hebrew parallelisms with their antique beauty and impressive simplicity, disregards the antiphonal structure which is the chief reason for the responsive rendering, and thus necessitates an undue length for united utterance, whence comes too often a racing of all people not to be behind at the last word, with a liability to a gabbling effect or a confused murmur as in unknown tongues. These last liabilities are well avoided by an admirable and dignified rendering in choral music so simple that all can join in it; but this expedient, though saving dignity, does not restore the poetic soul of the response, lost with the Hebrew parallelism. The non-prelatical churches have this great advantage over the prelatical — that in worship we have liberty, which we are using, to learn from them, while practically they have no liberty, perhaps no desire, to learn from us; yet it is wise for us not to forget that a mere imitating on our part is not necessarily learning.

A responsive utterance should be neither hasty nor drawling: it should be prompt and positive in its beginning; then deliberate, firm, and regulated in its process — all voices moving together, with no slighting or suppressing the last syllables of any words. Convenience and unity of effect indicate what will be found to be a natural law for plain speech by a devout multitude — that there should be generally an avoidance of inflections of tone and of all rhetorical expedients: the exercise is not a sermon nor a dramatic reading. The utterance should approach a monotone, though without a striving for effect in that direction. This rule is deeply founded, and has more importance, probably, than is commonly recognized.

As to the posture of the congregation in the responsive lessons of the regular service, no general rule can be given beyond that supplied by taste and convenience. Within each congregation there should be uniformity. It may be suggested, however, that while natural fitness indicates a reverent standing in the offering of direct praise to Almighty God by the great assembly, no such consideration requires standing in the usual responsive readings whose materials are not praise distinctively, but are mingled of praise and petition, and soliloquy and devout meditation, and historic reminiscence and prophecy, and instruction and warning, and promise and exhortation. If the worshiping congregation rise in their song and in all acts of direct praise and in the confession of the Christian faith, these acts will be likely to gain importance in their eyes if their distinctive posture be not applied to other parts of the service.

In churches that, with whatever varieties of polity, give prominence to the Christian fellowship of the local company of believers, and that have usages for the reception of new members into the local church, the responsive element may be applied in such usages with great impressiveness. The whole company of disciples, recognizing with welcome a new disciple, naturally and fitly unite their voices in responses (rather in assent or suffrage, with the minister. Similarly in services which accompany the communion at the Lord's table, and which have as their main idea the communion or fellowship of believers with one another through their common fellowship with the Lord Jesus, the united acclaim of the whole believing company should rise at due intervals, not (in services of this kind) to take the place of, but to join with and reënforce, the testimony from the pulpit. Moreover, the seeking out and arranging of proper scriptural forms for such common utterance would tend to turn this important class of fellowship services from the dry, cold, dogmatic, argumentative, or, at best, sermonic style, to the warmer, more spiritual, more edifying expressions, fitted for an occasion which celebrates the gathering of the fruit of doctrine and exhortation in the form of regenerate souls now joyfully welcomed as they enter the gates of the earthly Zion.

There remains to be noted one important form of response or of common assent and congregational suffrage, which has fallen into strange disuse — the often-recurring AMEN, in which a Christian assembly should join with their minister in acclaiming as their own all acts of distinctive prayer and praise. By what authority do so many Christian congregations dispense with this united confirmation? Let it resound again in all our sanctuaries, this responsive word of faith, commanded of God for his church under the old covenant; this word of courage and assurance, joyfully rendered by Christ's church as led by his apostles; this word of final triumph, whose acclaim, like the sound of many waters and the voice of mighty thunders, came upon the ears of him whose ears were opened to the worship of the church glorified on high.

X

THE LORD'S DAY SERVICE

ALL the diverse theories of public worship, all the requirements of different regions and periods — and of different congregations side by side — present themselves before him who sets forth to draw out a scheme for the parts and order of Divine service. Every step is among difficulties. He has to give account to the tastes of others — sometimes only another name for their prejudices, a merciless tribunal; he has to reckon with the ancient liturgic traditions in all their solemn dignity as though the apostles had established them; he must break in on the modern usage which, in churches that boast themselves of methods extemporaneous and free, has grown through habit into an unwritten liturgy — in some cases an evident lethargy; he has need to beware, most of all, of his own tastes, and of what he is likely to deem his chief strength,— namely, his most careful theories and his most lovely ideals.

Probably the most practicable theory is that no theory is practicable that aims at uniformity in public services, or applies itself rigidly to all details; not the theory of ancient tradition which gives character to the worship in the mediæval churches and their successors; nor the theory of logical process of parts, whose stern and unflinching steps mark all the liturgies of the Calvinistic family, now largely disused in the Presbyterian churches; nor the theory of æsthetic sentiment whose endeavor for beauty gives a barren stateliness when run into the antique ecclesiastical mold, and a trivial sentiment when run into modern forms; nor the theory of indifference to some of the natural laws of reverential expression, in which whole families of churches have rested for generations, thanking God that, whatever defective worship they might be bringing him, at least they were not like the prelatists.

Probably also, if the best scheme of public service were discovered, it would be found capable of adapting itself to the different wants of various congregations — also of avoiding monotony in the same congregation — through the provision for numerous alternatives and omissions, at discretion, while yet retaining its identity and the well-known advantages that a familiar usage gains in worship.

Previous to specific suggestions some general considerations have place.

A complete public Divine service presents three main elements: The rehearsing of the Word of Divine Revelation; the direct rendering of Worship in prayer and praise to God in Christ; the proclamation of the Gospel, with Christian instruction and exhortation, addressed to the assembly.

These three may be stated briefly, thus: Scripture, worship, preaching. Some minor elements, though desirable, need not be noted here.

An order of service cannot properly be arranged on the principle that one of these three is chief and should have such large and honorable place as to throw the other two into eclipse. Such a principle is a mistake and tends to mischief. The three elements rightfully are interfused through one another in every act in the Lord's house — all the Scripture both worshipful in spirit and instructive in effect, all the worship both Scriptural in its source and flow and instructive by illumination, all the preaching both Scriptural in its basis and tendency and worshipful in its tone. Certain parts in the service, indeed, will, as forms, partake more prominently of one of the three main elements; also, in any emergency, or for some special purpose of the kingdom, Christ gives his churches liberty and the guidance of the spirit, for enlargement in one kind of activity with reduction in other kinds; but regularly all should have their place and an equal honor. The mistake above adverted to has on the one hand so exalted worship that preaching has been reduced to a thing of naught; on the other hand it has so magnified the sermon — turning even the prayers and songs mostly into preachments — that God's worship has almost failed of any proper and direct expression in his house, being left to be reached by inference by whomsoever had sufficient capacity in that regard. Likewise there have been periods — now happily past — in which grand discourses of mighty reasoners about the Gospel, enforcing deep systems of theology, have resounded in the sanctuaries, while whole generations have entered and forever gone forth thence, scarcely hearing — except in such fragments as might serve the need of the sermon — the living oracles, the words of the Lord and his apostles in their large connection and their strong simplicity. Have we not in our own day heard all that preceded the sermon called "the preliminary exercises?"

The rivalry between worship and preaching for the highest place has arisen probably from the appeal which each of them is fitted to make to some of the strongest sentiments in man. Their appeal is to different classes of minds. To worship, the arts of poetry (sometimes only rhyme), of music, and of architecture have given aid fascinating to some minds, repulsive and alarming to others; to preaching have come the aids, equally artificial, of rhetoric, tone, and gesture, with the natural fire of oratory, with pathos, and with the humor strangely akin to pathos; and it is not clear whether the liability to receive such aids, or the actual lack of them in given cases, has brought preaching into disfavor with certain minds, in comparison with worship. Both are dramatic, or at least naturally facile for a dramatic development; the imagination is ready to lend wings to both; in each is the liability to development by a fascinating process into a sphere of sentiment and of sensuousness in which worship loses its simplicity and its foothold of fact, and preaching loses its soberness and honesty, while both alike lose themselves in unreality and are no more seen. A still more dangerous charm of preaching, however, has been the readiness with which it could be conscientiously turned aside from the simple Gospel to some good and wise man's opinions or arguments about the Gospel as these had hardened into sectarian systems. This — to vigorous and earnest minds, loving to "exercise themselves in great matters" rather than to "quiet themselves as weaned children" before God, and honestly convinced that the kingdom could thrive only in proportion as the Gospel was seen in the light of their respective systems — has given an intellectual delight far more subtle and more keen than the utmost dramatic height of either oratory or worship could supply.

For purposes of the theme now in hand, it is not necessary that we go so far as to deny to these various schools of thought and these preferences of individual minds a right to exist in Christ's church. Perhaps they have the right to die of themselves, and will exercise that right sooner if let alone. This we may say on the authority of Christ — that with such rivalries, or with any parties concerned therein, Christ's church, in ordering its public service in the community, has nothing to do further than to appoint that not any one of the three great natural elements of public divine service shall be enfeebled or reduced. Each may be fully developed without fear, while the other two have equal honor.

As to the arrangement of parts, the following suggestions are offered:

It is probably best that the first words in the service should be from the minister, as the leader authorized by the church; it is probably best also that the first words heard should be distinctively introductory to the sacred hour and scene; it is probably best, moreover, that these few words be a sentence of Holy Scripture. The inspired utterance best authenticates the exercises following; it is the surest key-note; it tends more than human speech or song to gain reverent attention. Also, being familiar, it is fitted to mental and spiritual states not instantly ready in these first moments to enter fully into other offices of prayer or praise. The scriptural opening is certainly preferable to what is called the "opening piece" of music — too often musically more an attempt than a success, and when well rendered as music and as worship, then out of place as an extended and elaborate performance at this threshold of entrance. Elaborate musical parts, if desired, should be introduced later in response to some lesson from the Scriptures or to the prayers. After the sentence from the pulpit, the musical response should be simple and short — a sentence from the Bible, chanted by all, or the familiar Doxology as a call to praise — "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

Our Lord's summary of the Law of God, or the Beatitudes, from his Sermon on the Mount, may well follow the opening sentences — frequently, if not in every service. The Calvinistic idea, imported into the Liturgy of the Church of England, is good — to get early in the service of the Gospel a firm foothold on the Law; but for constant use the Law at the lips of the Son of God is better than at the lips of Moses, not only for its brevity, as being a later and revised edition, but more for its supreme expression of the living spirit and of the inmost meaning of the Decalogue from him who is to us the whole Law in person.

A hymn, introductory or other, may then be sung.

The minister may then read from the Old Testament; after which, minister and congregation may read responsively from the Psalms, or from any psalm-like portions (mostly in the Old Testament) whose structure is suited for such antiphonal or echoing utterance.

A psalm of praise, chanted by all, in words and music which frequent use may make familiar, fitly concludes this Old Testament portion of the service.

The minister may then read from the New Testament, either in the Gospels or in the word of Christ's apostles, or in both.

At this point, when all hearts have been led upward through the teaching and the worship according to the Old Testament, and have now risen into the New, with its more mighty and tender revelation of God in his Son, it is natural and most fitting that those who are, or are willing now to become, Christ's disciples should stand, and openly, with full voice, confess their Christian faith, in the words of one of the ancient "creeds."

Such Christian confession joyfully and instantly merges into a song of high praise — preferably some Christian ascription, giving all blessing and eternal glory to the God of grace, the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

After such preparation of the worshipers through instructions from the word, and offices of united praise and faith, the chief prayers of the service now have place; moving with the successive (always brief) steps of adoration, thanksgiving, confession of sins, vow, supplication, intercession, plea (through Christ), ascription to God. All these short prayers, ending, may be summed up in the prayer which our Lord has taught us to say when we pray. At the end of all the prayer that precedes the Lord's Prayer (and of other prayers, and of all songs of praises and giving of thanks in the service), the AMEN should be heard from *all* — their united suffrage and consent. Some form of the ancient Litany may profitably be used instead of the extemporaneous prayers above noted, at the service with the communion, and perhaps at other times; but while it is proper that individual Christians be asked to yield their objections to it in deference to a general wish, it is evident that such a form will fail to be edifying and should not be persisted in, unless its use can gain the consent of the great body of worshipers.

The benevolent offerings of the congregation, for the needy and for the advance of Christ's kingdom, should now be made. This united offering is a free gift to God, an act of worship, setting its seal to the sincerity of the prayers just before uttered; since it is in furtherance of the objects for which the prayers were made. During the offering (not a contribution for mere current expenses) appropriate Scripture sentences may be slowly recited by the minister, who, at the end when the offering has been deposited, may — in behalf of all, now standing — render it to God in a few words of prayer and blessing: the blessing may, if preferred, be sung by all in familiar words.

The distinctively worshipful offices now end with a hymn of praise in familiar words and tune, so frequently recurring that all may join in them, and always ending with a Doxology to God as one, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Any notices of matters proper to be brought to the knowledge of the congregation may here be given; after which the sermon is preached, followed by a few words of prayer, a closing hymn, and a scriptural benediction. As the benediction ends, the congregation may join in the solemn and full AMEN.

When there is ministration of baptism to little children, or reception of new members into the church, those special services properly take the place of the usual confession of Christian faith (or "creed"); when the communion at the Lord's table is observed, it properly ends the service, following the sermon (if any), or taking the place of the sermon and all after it.

If a shorter and more simple service be desired, there may be various omissions from the above—notably, the summary of the Law, or the Beatitudes; the Scripture lesson from the Old Testament, for the Old Testament is presented also in the responsive lesson and the psalm chant, the creed, and the ascription that follows it.

May the suggestion be allowed that churches should pause before establishing a full order of service, and prescribing all its details by imperative rule? The use of such parts and order as may be deemed proper and edifying may be allowed by silent consent; thus an order of service may be permitted to establish itself only as it can prove itself helpful in actual use. To establish uniformity and an invariable usage by church law, tends toward ritualism, which, whether or not helpful to some worshipers, is liable to be a burden to many.

Let all things be done decently and in order, yet all things chiefly for the use of edifying; that in all things Christ Jesus may have honor in all the churches of the saints.

XI

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

ALL the days of a Christian life are consecrated to God. No one day, therefore, is to be held in superstitious regard, or made holy in any sense that leaves other days unholy.

Yet God's ordinances in the frame of the natural world and in the constitution of man, and more expressly in Holy Scripture, show the fitness and the benefit of assigning special times to special thoughts of devotion. The weekly and the annual Sabbaths, divinely commanded in the church of the old covenant, though transfigured by the Gospel, have never been abrogated. The ancient weekly Sabbath enriched with new meaning by Christ's victorious resurrection, and correspondingly changed in its period, became the LORD'S DAY; and the same sentiment which, with no recorded Divine command, led the first Christian disciples to commemorate the resurrection of the Lord by such new use of the chief Hebrew day, may properly lead us, as it undoubtedly led them, to commemorate by the use of other days the other grand and essential facts of His Messiahship. This argument, however, can be used to prove nothing beyond our Christian liberty to use such other days so far as we may find such use edifying: the head of the church gives no authority to impose their observance on a church or an individual, or to judge brethren who observe them not. Neither has he given any authority to forbid their use, or to judge brethren who observe them. The Lord's Day, however, since in its substance it was expressly ordained of God in the beginning, is through all time to be held chief of days in the Christian church.

The many incidental facts of the historic Gospel, the lives of the apostles, and the virtues of the saints whether of the Roman or the Puritan line, cannot be shown to have any natural place in the calendar of the general church. It is not necessary to deny individual right concerning them; it is necessary only to notice that their commemoration, though possibly helpful to some minds, is certainly burdensome by reason of number, and has been found practically injurious through its unavoidable tendency to lift the non-essentials in the Gospel to rank with the essential — human saintship with the Divine Messiahship.

Having claimed, as against some watchful brethren, our liberty in Christ's church to commemorate with special observance the few essential facts of his history, it remains for us to prove that it is wise to use this liberty. The appeal is simple and direct — to God's natural laws, the fitness of things, and the constitution of the human soul: three forms of an appeal essentially one.

First. Using the year with its successive anniversaries to commemorate the few grand Christian facts, chimes in with God's natural order. It consecrates nature with grace. It claims all times for the Son of God. It blesses the passing seasons in his name. It compels the planet on which he was crucified to mark in its vast orbit the successive stages of His Messiahship from advent in meekness to advent in final glory. Thus doing, it distinctly claims for him sovereignty and headship over nature — for him in whom all nature subsists. It is no small thing that is done by his believing church when it thus elevates and spiritualizes the entire order and process of the natural things; challenging the whole materialistic degradation of them wrought whether by the ancient paganism or the modern worldly thought. This unfaltering presentation through natural symbols of the Kingship of the Victim Christ, early brought to bear upon the mind of childhood, continuously proceeding on the pathway of the years, is a mode of influence too valuable to be despised as merely a poetic sentiment, or to be discredited through a narrow prejudice.

Second. Observing the great anniversaries of our faith puts honor on the historic method, which God chose rather than the doctrinal or any other to be the fundamental method of his revelation in his Son. How did God reveal himself to the world? Primarily by entering personally into human history. The truth, the life, was manifested first personally in divine deeds and events. These are the massive framework of all our precious doctrines. The doctrines of the Gospel the church may in no wise fail to declare to men, and in due system also; and this is best done, most surely and vitally, in their historic root and connection, and in their historic development. Why should we not use God's way? In social life we observe birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and the like; many local churches observe with special services the date of foundation; year by year the national anniversaries are observed; on Forefathers' Day we recall the heroism of the men who founded a nation on Plymouth Rock. Such days are felt to be profitable for special remembrances; so the church, associating the great truths of Christ's Gospel with their memorial days, makes them vivid and present, and gives aid to men in fastening these truths in their minds and impressing them on their hearts.

Third. Commemorating with annual observance the great facts of the faith insures the due presentation of the full circle of facts which frame Christ's Gospel. A just perspective is established. The grandest things are projected so that even a casual glance must note them. Each passing year is ordained to preach them. No idiosyncrasy of preacher or taste of hearer is allowed its way unchecked in magnifying some minor truth or duty to the neglect of the weightier. There stand the mountain ranges of saving truth, from which all bearings may be taken whereby Christian sentiment may find its most beneficial course. Human systems of truth, framed as they mostly have been as implements of warfare, or as fortresses for refuge, or as battle-standards — this militancy, alas! not always against the common foe, but sometimes against brethren in a strife of sects — we may vainly hope to see dispensed with by any expedient; for such human systems seem to belong to us in our partly sanctified nature. But a constant reversion to the common historical foundation-facts involving the Gospel in its fullness and simplicity, would tend at least to check our one-sidedness in developing such systems and our uncharitableness in using them. The commemoration of the facts and events points to the divine word in which they are made known, and so may easily be used to bring the word into full presentation in the assemblies of the church.

From the above considerations it may be judged that the general church, which keeps the Lord's Day as divinely appointed,— a duty transfigured into a privilege,— should enroll on its calendar for any who may find edification in such observance, the two civic days of fast and thanksgiving, if those be appointed by the civil power; and the six great days of Christ's Messiahship — Nativity, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Advent. Of these six the dates of all except the first and last are traceable as anniversaries of actual events in history; the date of the Nativity is unknown, but we who consent to number all years backward and forward from it as an epoch, may consistently join in the common usage of its celebration; the Advent looks first backward to Christ's whole coming forth from the Father into our world, and forward thence to the consummation of his coming in that Final Day of the Revelation of the Son of Man for which all other days were made. Let the procession of the years proclaim him until earthly years shall be no more.